USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE **Eastern and Southern Caribbean**

Regional Development Cooperation Strategy 2015-2019
(Public Version)

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ACRONYMNS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ART – Anti-retroviral therapy
CARICOM – Caribbean Community
CBSI – Caribbean Basin Security Initiative
5Cs – Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CDB – Caribbean Development Bank
CRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRSF – Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework
CSW – Commercial Sex Worker
CXC – Caribbean Examination Council
DFATD – Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development
DLI – Development Leadership Initiative
DO – Development Objective
ESC – Eastern and Southern Caribbean
EU – European Union
GBV – Gender-based violence
GDP – Gross domestic product
HTC – HIV Testing and Counseling
ICS – Integrated Country Strategy
IDB – Inter-American Development Bank
KP – Key Population
KPCF – Key Population Challenge Fund
MSM – Men having sex with Men
M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation
OAS – Organization of American States
OECS – Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OGAC – Office of Global AIDS Coordinator
OYB – Operating Year Budget
PANCAP – Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS
PEHRBs – Persons engaged in high risk behaviors
PEPFAR – President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PHDP – Positive Health Dignity Programs
PMP – Performance Management Plan
PIRS – Performance Indicator Reference Sheets
PLHIV – People living with HIV
PPL – Policy Planning and Learning
RDCS – Regional Development Cooperation Strategy
ROP – Regional Operational Plan
SW – Sex Workers
SIDS – Small Island Developing States
TG - Transgender
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USAID/ESC – USAID/Eastern and Southern Caribbean
USAID/LAC – USAID/Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) region includes the six independent countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines), Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname, all of which emerged as independent nations only in the last 50 years. Situated between South America and the United States, the region has become a key conduit for regional trade as well as, more recently, illicit drug en route from South America to North America and Europe.

The ten countries of the ESC region vary in demographic and ethnic composition, and the drivers of economic growth in the two South American countries (mining and agriculture) and in Trinidad and Tobago (energy) differ from those of the six other OECS island states and Barbados (tourism). Yet these ten countries share some of the most severe challenges to their sustainable development. Those common challenges include:

- Crime and security. As counter-drug enforcement and interdiction efforts clamp down on trafficking routes in Central America and Mexico, trafficking in the Caribbean has intensified. With the high unemployment that has resulted from the post-2008 economic recession, the lure of gangs and criminal activity has been strong for many youths, particularly the growing number of males who have underperformed in primary and secondary school.
- HIV/AIDS. The Caribbean has the world's second-highest regional rate of HIV prevalence, behind only Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Global Climate Change. Increasing weather volatility and storm surges are threatening communities and taking a growing toll on economic infrastructure throughout the Caribbean. In the longer run, rising sea levels pose an enormous challenge, particularly to the seven (7) small island developing states most dependent on beach tourism.

To address these development challenges, the USAID/ESC proposes three development objectives (DOs) and requests the program resources, staff, and operating expense budget required to achieve them:

- DO1: Youth involvement in crime and violence in target communities reduced. The mission will achieve this DO by:
    - Increasing regional coordination of crime prevention,
    - Increasing the use of alternative justice systems for juvenile offenders, and
    - Increasing the ability of youths and their communities to withstand crime and violence.

- DO2: Epidemic control of HIV/AIDS among key populations increased, through:
    - Increasing utilization of prevention, care, and treatment services,
    - Improving the quality of HIV prevention, care and support services, and
    - Improving the enabling environment for the delivery of HIV/AIDS services

- DO3: Negative impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations and natural assets reduced. USAID's programs will achieve this DO by:
    - Strengthening use of climate science and analysis for decision making and
    - Reducing the negative impact of climate change on vulnerable populations.

USAID's work in the ESC region directly supports United States foreign policy priorities, fortifying efforts to stem crime and violence and sustain development gains achieved over the past three decades.

USAID/ESC is prepared to respond to the challenges facing the region through a tailored approach to regional programming that prioritizes resources based on need, host-country commitment, and capacity and enables a limited number of staff to effectively design, monitor, and evaluate activities. USAID/ESC's work will align with regional priorities and will directly support three presidential initiatives: the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and the Global Climate Change Initiative.

USAID/ESC will use its platform as a multi-country service provider to promote local actors and regional entities as partners, enhancing their capacity to achieve common goals and support broader foreign policy priorities in the region. The mission will also utilize the capacity of well-established partners to test promising interventions that can be scaled up to a regional level.

USAID/ESC will concentrate resources in the neediest of countries and in those with the host-country commitment and capacity to use our assistance effectively.

Over the five-year planning period, USAID/ESC will request a steady level of program resources from the agency's CBSI, PEPFAR and GCC accounts.

I. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) region includes the six independent countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines), Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname, all of which emerged as independent nations only in the last 50 years. Situated between South America and the United States, the region has become a key conduit for regional trade as well as, more recently, illicit drug en route from South America to North America and Europe.

These countries, most of them small island developing states (SIDS), with their small populations, limited land masses, and relative isolation, are more complex and varied than the SIDS label may denote. Seven of the ten countries covered by USAID/ESC, for example, have populations under 300,000, while Trinidad and Tobago's is four times that. Ethnic composition (Guyana is the most diverse) and age structure (youth comprise 37 percent of Guyana's population but only 21 percent of Trinidad and Tobago's) vary widely.

The region has enjoyed significant advances in human development, as evidenced by improved access to health care, fertility rates near replacement level, high life expectancy, low infant and child mortality, and universal access to primary education for both girls and boys. The region can also boast progress in political stability and democratic governance. Yet deterioration of security throughout the region threatens to derail progress. The global economic downturn of 2008 hit these countries hard, underscoring their dependence on tourism and the vulnerability of an agricultural industry overly dependent on exports of primary commodities. In the longer run, the ESC countries are among the most vulnerable to global climate change.

A. Economic Performance

Heavily dependent on tourism revenues, the countries of the ESC were hit hard by the global economic recession that began in 2008. Most countries of the region borrowed significantly to weather the economic storm and are now burdened by excessive external debt and public budget deficits that severely constrain their ability to deliver adequate social services.

Public sector deficits and debt have surged in tandem with the collapse of real growth rates, increasing vulnerability to external shocks and reducing the policy options available to address the relatively high rates of poverty and unemployment.

Table 1 shows rates of economic growth since 2008. Hardest hit was Antigua and Barbuda, where economic contraction approached 12 percent in 2009 but which returned to positive growth in 2012. Almost all of the Region's SIDS have had at least some years of negative growth in recent years, while the South American Caribbean nations of Guyana and Suriname, with their more diversified economies, have managed steady, if modest, levels of growth. Since 2008, the economies of the Caribbean SIDS have performed less well than the larger LAC region and less well than the small states group globally.

Table 1: GDP Growth in Select Caribbean Countries (2008-2012)
Source: The World Bank

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Global Comparisons					
World	1.3%	-2.2%	4.3%	2.7%	2.4%
Middle Income Countries	5.7%	2.7%	7.8%	6.3%	5.1%
Small States	3.3%	-1.4%	2.9%	2.6%	1.6%
Latin American Average	4.1%	-1.6%	6.0%	4.6%	2.9%
Caribbean SIDS					
Antigua and Barbuda	0.02%	-11.9%	-7.9%	-5.0%	3.3%
Barbados	0.2%	-5.3%	0.3%	0.8%	0%
Dominica	8.0%	5.9%	1.0%	-0.3%	-1.2%
Grenada	1.0%	-6.6%	-0.04%	0.9%	-1.8%
St. Kitts and Nevis	4.7%	-6.9%	-2.4%	2.1%	-1.2%
St. Lucia	5.3%	0.1%	0.4%	1.3%	-1.3%
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1.4%	-2.2%	-2.8%	0.1%	1.6%
Trinidad and Tobago	2.7%	-3.3%	0%	-4.1%	1.5%
LAC Small States					
Guyana	1.9%	3.3%	4.4%	5.4%	4.8%
Suriname	4.1%	3.0%	4.1%	4.7%	3.9%

The small labor markets of Caribbean SIDS are characterized by high labor costs and relatively high unemployment. Youth unemployment rates are nearly double the rate of unemployment of the national average in each country. Compounding this are the hemorrhaging of skilled labor migrating to other countries of North America and education systems that do not adequately prepare students for the job market.

B. Energy

The high cost of energy remains a significant constraint to economic growth and competitiveness and to the efficient delivery of some social services throughout the Caribbean region. Due to the high costs of imported fossil fuels and the relatively small size of power generating plants in these small countries, the costs of thermal power generation average 40-45 cents per kilowatt hour, among the highest rates in the world. Furthermore, most Caribbean governments are using attractive credit terms to defer payments for petroleum and could lead to accumulated outsized long-term debts that have the potential to jeopardize their long-term fiscal health. The cost problem is compounded by low efficiency of energy use in buildings, appliances, and industrial processes and by inadequate development of low-cost indigenous sources like hydropower and geo-thermal generation. Generally-agreed mediation measures in the medium-to-long term, include development of renewable energy sources (which will become economically feasible in the Caribbean before they will in regions of the world where thermal

generation is less costly), expansion of a network of submarine cables to enable a regional energy grid, and improved efficiency of energy use.

C. Security and Governance

According to the 2012 Caribbean Human Development Report, high levels of violent crime are hindering development in the region.[i] According to the report, "Crime, particularly violent crime, tends to have a negative impact on vulnerable economies such as those of the Caribbean. It erodes confidence in the future development of countries, reduces competitiveness of existing industries and services …" While accurate indicators and complete data are lacking, and government leaders are reluctant to share crime data for fear of portraying a violent region, available information indicates an upward trend in crime and violence. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports that the homicide rate in the region increased by an average of nearly 165 percent from 2000 to 2010.[ii] Transnational organized crime networks are expanding and diversifying their activities, resulting in the convergence of risks and threats that are increasingly complex and destabilizing. The trafficking of illicit drugs and illegal guns is still the primary activity of transnational organized crime in the region. Levels of insecurity are rising along with increases in unemployment and income inequality and low levels of economic growth.

D. Education

Despite relatively high enrollment rates at both the primary and secondary schools, young people leaving secondary school, in many Caribbean SIDS do so without basic attainment levels required for employment or advanced education. This is particularly true for English and Mathematics, which students are usually required to pass to obtain employment or pursue tertiary education. In June 2011, only 35 percent of students received passing grades in Mathematics, while 67 percent passed English A (CXC, 2011). Country Poverty Assessment (CPA) data for Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines also revealed that educational attainment was much lower for students in poorer quintiles, with a higher likelihood for the poor to complete school without passing any examinations or with lower level qualifications. This high rate of failure limits opportunity for legitimate employment.

E. Health

As a region, the Caribbean has the second-highest HIV prevalence rate in the world, behind only sub-Saharan Africa. The AIDS epidemic continues to be the leading cause of death among Caribbean adults aged 25 to 44, with 250,000 adults and children reported to be living with HIV in 2012. However, with a decline of 49 percent in new infections reported in 2012, the Caribbean region has recorded the world's most profound regional decline since 2001. The ongoing epidemic is primarily due to sexual transmission, and is concentrated in key populations, including men having sex with men (MSM), sex workers and their clients, and those engaged in transactional sex.

The challenging legal environment in the Caribbean has resulted in these most at risk populations being driven underground and afraid to come forward to get tested or even seek primary health care services. There are also very high levels of stigma and discrimination across the region which has created a significant gap in the effort to provide key populations with comprehensive HIV and AIDS services and to improve the overall national response to more effectively address their needs and the overall epidemic. Partner country governments and civil society partners therefore need to have strong technical capacity and established system reaching key populations through evidence-based prevention, care and treatment services at scale, including referrals and linkages across the community clinic service continuum.

F. Environment

Global Climate Change

Weak economies and unsustainable levels of debt challenge the ability of the ESC countries to recover from more frequent natural disasters, particularly hurricanes and extreme weather events. The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5C's) has identified climate change as the most serious threat to sustainable development in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)[iii] region. Currently, economic growth in the Caribbean continues to be hindered and constrained by the effects of hurricanes and other extreme weather events.

Recent examples of repeated environmental shocks in Caribbean SIDS and other LAC Small States illustrate the gravity of this vulnerability. For instance, hurricane Ivan which struck Grenada in 2004 damaged 90 percent of the country's buildings and left half of the population homeless. St. Lucia found itself with significant infrastructural damage and loss of life after being hit by Hurricane Tomas in November 2010, a little over three years after Hurricane Dean severely damaged its roadways and coastlines. Natural disasters also have debilitating effects on labor and employment. In 2008 Hurricane Omar's devastation led to the two-year closure of the Four Seasons Resort on the island of Nevis, one of the main employers in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Coastal and coral reef degradation due to climate change could have a devastating effect on freshwater supply, but most importantly will significantly impact the region's economy through reduced habitat for fish and shellfish, diminished appeal for tourists, and a lessened capacity to protect the shoreline. In the longer run, rising sea levels, and the concomitant rise in storm surge levels, will require huge investments in protection, relocation, and adaptation of economic infrastructure located on the coastlines of all the SIDS.

In addition, Caribbean nations, and SIDS in particular, see energy dependency and resulting debt as key components of adaptation to climate change. Expansion of the green economy, particularly beyond agriculture and climate-resilient tourism and services, to include issues of energy efficiency and use, is critical to SIDS' economic and social adaptation to climate change.

Biodiversity Conservation

USAID conducted a tropical forests and biodiversity assessment for the Eastern and Southern Caribbean in September 2013. The assessment revealed that the direct threats to tropical forests and biological diversity in Eastern and Southern Caribbean countries vary according to the range of ecosystems, size of the countries and extent of remaining habitat, and different levels of development, monitoring, and protection. In most of the countries, poorly planned development, weak land use planning, and lack of enforcement capacity constitute some of the primary threats. In Suriname and Guyana, mining and poorly planned development are the main threats. Overfishing and uncontrolled coastal development, including destruction of mangroves, negatively impact coral reefs in almost all of the countries. In Antigua and Barbuda, Tobago, Grenada, St Lucia, and Barbados, infrastructure development related to tourist facilities exerts pressure on coastal resources. Finally, agricultural expansion in some countries, notably Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, threatens tropical forests. Poaching of wildlife for international trade is particularly problematic in Suriname and Guyana.

G. Gender

Gender concerns are central to USAID/ESC's approach to achieving the development objectives under its new RDCS. According to the USAID/ESC Gender Assessment, gender dynamics in the Caribbean are more complex than those in many other regions or countries. Some gender inequalities appear to have tilted toward male marginalization, especially in terms of underachievement and school dropout rates. However, while the educational attainment of women exceeds that of men, women's employment prospects remain limited, with many women confined to low status and low-paying positions. Moreover, both boys and girls (particularly those from poor households) are under performing, which has a major impact on gender relations and labor market outcomes.

Gender identities, based on traditional notions of what it "means" to be a man or a woman, remain strong predictors of opportunity in the Caribbean. The urgent need to address gender concerns is most evident in the high rates of violence against women and growing incidences of gender-based violence (GBV) against stigmatized groups, the inability of women and girls to negotiate safe sex, which is linked to higher incidences of HIV/AIDS, rising rates of poverty among female-headed households, and inequalities in employment opportunities and educational achievement. Throughout the region, men and women remain trapped in socially-prescribed roles, fueling expectations and behavior patterns that negatively affect their health and life choices.

Though difficult to trace because of limited data, anecdotal evidence suggests that violence and abuse is increasing, and it is especially affecting women and children. At least 40 to 50 percent of women experience domestic violence. This estimate may be low, however, because victims generally do not report abuse, and there are inadequate systems for reporting and investigating. Unfortunately there is limited scope for recourse, because domestic violence laws are non-existent, weak, or not consistently enforced throughout much of the region.

Discrimination against LGBTI persons is embedded across the Eastern and Southern Caribbean. Many countries still have anti-buggery laws, and, though homosexuality itself is not illegal, discrimination can be seen regularly in the public statements of high-ranking officials, in newspaper columns, and among the general public. USAID's HIV/AIDS prevention programs target men who have sex with men (MSM) as a highly at-risk group. Given prevailing gender norms related to masculinity, they too are forced to suppress their gender identities and are fearful of accessing HIV/AIDS information or services. In many cases, men who have sex with men do not identify as gay, which can affect their perception of HIV risk. Some men maintain dual lifestyles as married men with children but engage in sexual relationships with other men. This behavior increases not only men's risk of acquiring HIV, but also increases their female partners' risk of acquiring HIV as well.

Given all these realities, USAID/ESC will endeavor to consider gender implications in all its programming and incorporate appropriate measures to ensure activities promote inclusion, target the neediest groups and do not exacerbate existing gender inequalities. Data will also be disaggregated by sex to ensure that person level indicators are disaggregated by sex in the PMP and the monitoring and evaluation plans.

H. Donor Coordination

USAID/ESC works in collaboration with USG agencies, host country governments, regional organizations, donors, and other stakeholders to develop a shared agenda for a safer and more prosperous Caribbean. A key component of this RDCS is the alignment of activities with U.S. foreign policy priorities in the region, as well as analysis of the donor landscape and funding priorities in the region.

The majority of development resources in the region are provided by USAID, the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the United Kingdom's Department for Development (DFID), the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), the Organization of the American States (OAS), European Union (EU), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GF) and UN agencies, including United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF). Knowledge of other donor activities and analysis of synergies with USAID's work are maintained by USAID/ESC staff, and activities will be adjusted in future years to account for any significant change in the donor landscape. A more detailed accounting of the priorities and programs of the other major donors in USAID's priority program areas is presented under the discussion of each DO in section III below.

I. Critical Assumptions and Risks

USAID/ESC's RDCS is based upon certain critical assumptions and risks that are beyond the manageable interests of USAID, and which have potential to impact the strategy's successful implementation. These are detailed below:

Assumptions:

1) USAID/ESC will continue to receive CBSI funding to support regional approaches to crime prevention while CARICOM continues to welcome USG assistance in the areas defined within this development objective.
2) Governments of the region will continue to support USAID's efforts and welcome USG support for crime prevention.
3) Regional cooperation on shared agenda items such as education reform and targeting vulnerable populations for HIV/AIDS is seen as mutually beneficial and prioritized by regional governments.
4) Donor landscape, including both technical focus and level of funding, remains stable.
5) Economic downturn or stagnation will not adversely affect host country or regional contributions to HIV/AIDS programs in the region.
6) Host country governments and civic partners will continue to support HIV/AIDS complementary prevention activities to bridge service and programmatic gaps.
7) PEPFAR funding for HIV activities will continue to be allocated to the Caribbean Region, with the Office of Global AIDS coordinator supporting activities in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean
8) USAID/ESC and development partners will be able to continue leveraging regional, national and local resources, public and private, toward addressing the increasing impacts of global climate change.

Risks:

1) Trade restrictions or agreements impact vital sectors of the economy resulting in unanticipated large levels of unemployment.
2) Significant increase in crime and violence erodes citizen security to the point that renders USAID programming at current levels ineffective.

3) A critical mass of donors ceases work in the region, blunting USAID's ability to achieve its goals.
4) As development increases in one Caribbean nation, migration flows that follow, stress the ability of governments to provide social services for an increased population, negatively impacting USAID's ability to program effectively.
5) Major disaster as result of natural occurrence (hurricane, earthquake) significantly impairs the region's economy.

These assumptions and risks collectively set the background for USAID programming, and will be monitored to determine the extent to which objectives are hindered or promoted by any changes.

J. Cross-cutting Lessons Learned

Increased Engagement with Regional Organizations. USAID/ESC's experience suggests that there is value in complementing country-specific programming with regional engagement. Partnering with regional entities supports USAID Forward policy directives and enables a standardization of successful models across the region. Further, a regional approach helps bring interventions to scale and provides comparable data across countries to measure and assess impacts. Enhanced investment across the region will require increased coordination and alignment to regional and sub-regional priorities and, as such, all USAID projects will contribute to an overall, strategic and coordinated effort with regional counterparts.

Data Collection and Analysis. The relative absence of reliable data in the region presents an enormous challenge for USAID, other USG agencies, the donor community and national and regional counterparts. Anecdotal rather than scientific evidence guides policy discussions and decisions. As a result, various actors throughout the region are unable to identify development trends or measure programmatic impact. Further, as economic growth throughout the region becomes increasingly service-oriented and dependent upon the tourism sector, host government counterparts are less willing to share data, particularly related to crime, that may adversely affect tourism and employment. USAID will focus on data collection, analysis and reporting as a core overarching theme in its upcoming strategy. Building the measurement capacity of regional institutions and civil society organizations, including academia, will help to more accurately identify trends and measure impact across the region. As a result, national and regional actors representing both state and society will benefit from more informed, evidence-based and data-driven decision making.

Enhancing Cross-Sectoral Synergies. USAID/ESC has identified missed opportunities in cross-sectoral coordination and programming that, moving forward in this strategy, will be included to improve synergies between activities. For example, linkages between the climate change and workforce development activities targeting the region's most at-risk youth will be fostered as employment opportunities expand in industries and economic sectors that support sustainable tourism, climate-resilient agriculture, energy security, and sustainable infrastructure development to reduce adverse impacts on the environment. The more focused geographic approach will enhance USAID/ESC's ability to build cross-sectoral linkages.

Doing More with Less (Fewer Mechanisms). USAID/ESC's limited resources, both human and financial, makes the management of multiple small mechanisms challenging. Opportunities to consolidate programs and reduce management burden to ensure development resources achieve greater impact will be emphasized in this strategy. During the lifetime of the strategy, some mechanisms will be designed at the regional level to work across target countries based on technical themes. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, technical assistance and training will be tailored to the realities of each target country. Through these mechanisms, USAID will also seek to identify and replicate successful models and pilots throughout the region in a manner consistent with the geographic focus of the five-year strategy.

II. GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND PRIORITIZATION

To maximize resources, USAID will focus resources where they are most needed and can have the greatest impact. Moreover, the number of cooperating recipient countries in this regional portfolio has changed several times in recent years and may change again, in response to political considerations or evolving agency priorities.

The mission believes that, in setting its program priorities, the most relevant factors to take into consideration are need, commitment, and capacity.

1. The most important of these factors is **need**, which has two dimensions:

    a. Severity of the development challenge to be addressed. A country with greater youth involvement in crime or a higher HIV prevalence rate or a greater vulnerability to climate change should receive more assistance than a country of similar size with a less severe development challenge.

    b. Population. A country with a larger population needs more assistance than a small country with a similar development challenge.

2. Host-Country **commitment** is essential to success. A country with a high level of commitment to addressing its development challenges will likely make better use of donor resources than one that is not taking its own problems as seriously. Measures of such commitment might include domestic budget allocations or the enabling environment (policies, laws, regulations) put in place to help address the challenge.

3. Country **capacity** is key to success and sustainability of USAID results. This factor might be argued either way. Some argue that a country with low capacity should receive more USAID assistance in order to build that capacity. This mission believes that capacity building is the essence of development, but that greater capacity means that a country can use USAID assistance more effectively.

USAID/ESC will apply these principles to guide program investments allocations under each DO. They will be used to provoke thoughtful decision-making on budget allocations within the ESC region. They may not be the only factors used in discussions on priorities, but will contribute a priority and valued perspective. Other, important factors include program success or failure (including findings of project evaluations), political relations between the United States and each partner country, the shifting availability of overall budgets and Congressional directives and earmarks, and, in any given year, the outstanding financial commitments that USAID carries into the future.

III. GOALS OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED RESULTS

A. Goal, Objectives and Development Hypothesis

USAID/ESC's goal is: "Safer, more prosperous Caribbean Communities." Indicators of progress toward that goal are:

- Number of international homicides per 100,000 population
- Per capita GDP for the ten-country region

The mission has three development objectives, the achievement of which will promote achievement of the goal:

- DO1: Youth involvement in crime and violence in targeted communities reduced
- DO2: Epidemic control of HIV/AIDS among key populations increased
- DO3: Risks to human and natural assets resulting from climate vulnerability reduced.

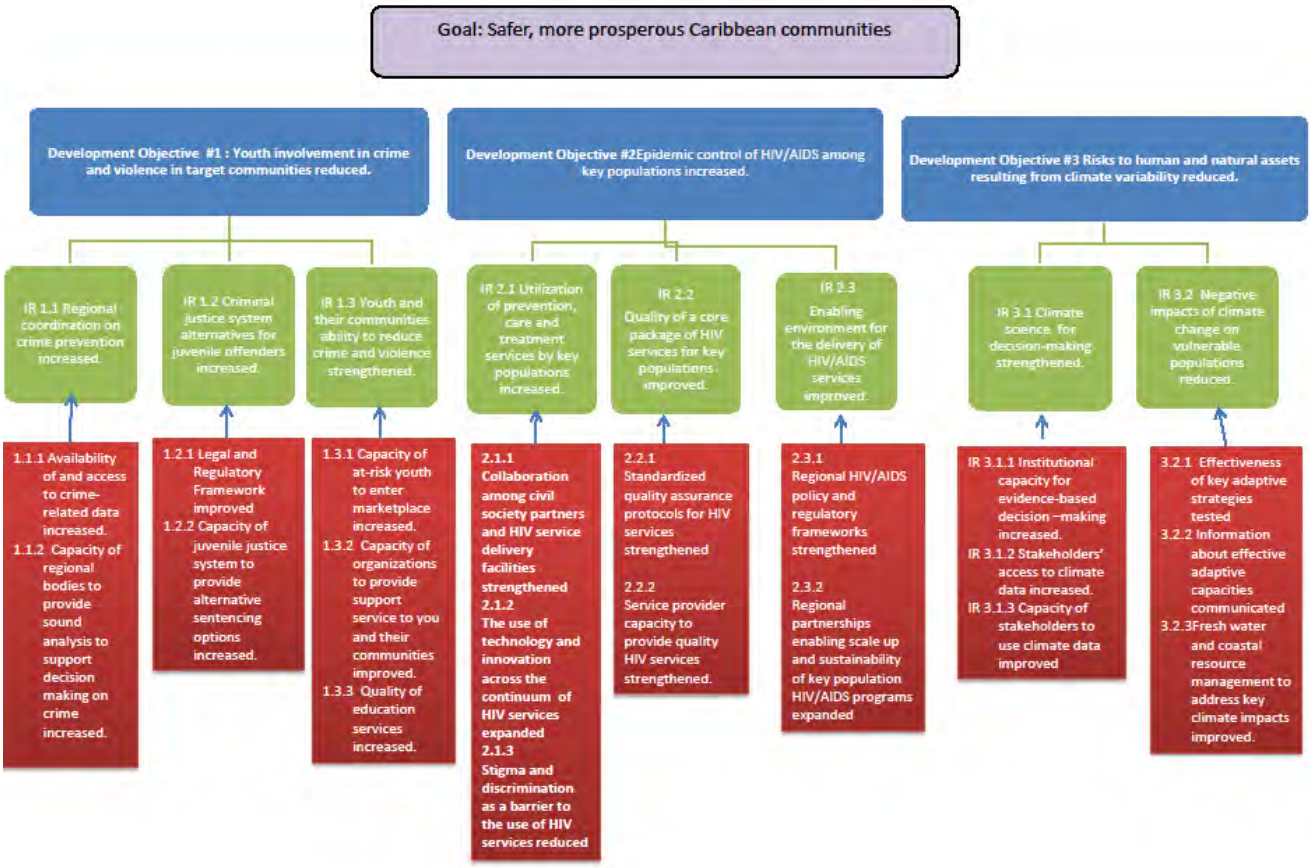
Achievement of these objectives will not be sufficient to push these countries across the "goal" line. The governments, businesses, civil societies, and people of all ten ESC countries must insist on better governance and must make tough policy changes to enable faster, sustainable economic growth. But the USAID/ESC's hypothesis is that these three objectives are necessary to the process. Put another way, the communities of the Caribbean are unlikely to become sustainably safe and prosperous *without* achieving these three development objectives.

In the short run, security must underlie economic growth. Increasing crime rates scare off foreign investment and give domestic investors cause to move their assets off-shore. Furthermore, a growing disaffected cohort of unemployed youth could unravel the social fabric of the region. It is imperative, therefore, to provide opportunities for at-risk youth to gain the skills they need to seek productive employment and have a stake in the stability and prosperity of the Caribbean. At the same time, the national criminal justice systems must develop constructive alternatives to incarceration for minor offenses, particularly for first-time offenders who are not destined to become hardened criminals. Finally, regional cooperation, including improved and more accessible data, will enhance the adoption of best practices and focus resources where they are most needed in this sector.

In the medium term, an unchecked increase in HIV infections would also have a de-stabilizing effect. Given the lasting momentum that an unimpeded disease vector can have, and the havoc it can wreak in terms of medical costs, lost productivity, and social upheaval, it is critical to focus on reducing HIV new infections and reducing transmission through improved care and treatment long before an epidemic of African-like proportions develops. To do this, the utilization of prevention, care, and treatment services must increase, the quality of these services must be improved, and the enabling environment for the provision and use of these services must be enhanced.

In the longer run, global climate change will severely affect the ESC region, particularly the SIDS, where a high proportion of economic infrastructure is located along the vulnerable coast lines. Increasing weather volatility and storm surges increasingly threaten many Caribbean communities, both urban and agricultural. And rising sea levels will require very costly protective and relocation measures over the decades ahead. Learning and planning to adapt to these changes is an immediate priority. For this, climate science for decision making must be strengthened both nationally and regionally, and measurable progress must be achieved in reducing the negative impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable populations of the Caribbean.

USAID/ESC Results Framework



C. Development Objective 1: At-Risk Youth

Youth involvement in crime and violence in target communities reduced

USAID/ESC's regional strategy for 2011 – 2015 focused on workforce development for at-risk youth and juvenile justice and as components of the overall USG goal of strengthening citizen security in the region. USAID's workforce development efforts achieved significant results, enabling several groups of youth to develop life skill/soft skills such as discipline, teamwork, and respect coupled with basic dress and communication skills. They were also provided with technical, vocational training and entrepreneurship training that led to meaningful employment. USAID's juvenile justice efforts focused on bringing the region's juvenile justice system more in line with internationally agreed standards, including the use of alternative sentencing, increased diversion options, training of justice system personnel and modifying procedures to make them less intimidating to youth.

While the mission achieved considerable success, it learned that, to effect real change in citizen security, USAID must take a more holistic approach to reach and help youth at risk to crime and violence in the region, not focusing simply on workforce development and juvenile justice. USAID must also address the environment in which these youth live, including their families, the broader community, and the educational system that affect the opportunities youth have. Host-country governments, USAID, and other partners must also better understand the dimensions of the problem to address its root causes, including the weak education system that leads to high drop-out rates and youth exiting primary education with inadequate literacy and numeracy skills. USAID has also found that there are huge gaps in available data on crime and that existing data are often of poor quality, a situation which can make it difficult for governments to determine what works and what programs most effectively help youth avoid the cycle of criminality.

Under the new strategy, USAID will engage with youth in vulnerable communities, strengthen the links between the education system and the labor market, and build capacity of institutions providing support to at-risk youth. Assistance will also be provided to continue efforts to strengthen the juvenile justice sector. New approaches will be incorporated including restorative justice measures and rehabilitative approaches for juvenile offenders. USAID will expand its focus on basic education as a key prevention strategy, recognizing that one of the drivers of juvenile vulnerability to crime and violence is poor literacy and numeracy skills. The new strategy will also include a component focused on the development of formulized data collection and the analysis of standardized crime data to enable partner governments to make data-driven decisions on how to improve citizen security. To enhance USAID's ability to measure impact, USAID will focus on better defining key variables like at-risk youth, risky behavior and a reduction of risky behavior.

USAID/ESC identified three areas critical to making Caribbean youth less vulnerable to engaging in crime and violence, including regional crime prevention, criminal justice system reform, and support for youth and their communities. Efforts to reduce and prevent crime in the ESC are hampered by poorly coordinated multilateral efforts, a lack of standardized data and analysis to inform policy decisions, and weak information-sharing among and between countries. Strengthening communities' social and economic resilience, while addressing the risk factors that create an environment in which criminal organizations can exist and thrive, will contribute to improving citizen security in targeted communities through the region. Regional and country-specific crime prevention efforts will not only address the underlying social and economic drivers of violence, but will also support juvenile justice reform.

Due to the challenging economic environment of the region, many youth struggle to make a successful transition into adulthood as productive members of society. Despite relatively high GDP per capita in

most ESC countries, unemployment hovers around 12-20 percent, and youth (15-24) unemployment ranges from 20 to 40 percent in the countries of the region. High income inequality, high national and local debt, and weak social support networks exacerbate vulnerable socio-economic situations. Across the region national economies remain in recession, challenging governments' and households' ability to repay incurred debt. Tax revenues remain insufficient to fully fund social services. Governments unwilling to raise taxes increasingly attempt to pass the costs of education, health and other services on to citizens, whose ability to provide essentials is strained by higher prices for food and goods. Local populations perceive shrinking economic opportunity despite relatively high literacy rates. Low educational attainment is among the factors that induce youth to become involved in crime and violence. Girls tend to stay in school longer than boys and generally have higher educational attainment; however pregnancy and child care requirements can force girls out of school and present significant barriers to the re-entry of vulnerable youth into the formal education system. Approximately 50 percent of primary school students underperform in Mathematics, as do about 40 percent in English language.[iv] Secondary school dropout rates are high and rising due to increasing teen pregnancy rates, school-related conflicts, poor academic achievement and weak community support structures. Similarly, tertiary education attendance is low. Even those who complete secondary education often are unable to secure employment, reinforcing evidence that academic study does not provide the skills required by employers.

Increasing youth employment rates and improving the quality of education are necessary but not sufficient to reducing and preventing crime and violence. Myriad risk factors are associated with youth susceptibility to becoming victims or perpetrators of crime and include exposure to violence in the home or community, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of adult role models, an absence of community-level social support structures, and distrust of authorities, among others. An effective crime and violence prevention program must address these community-level issues by building community-level capacity to design and implement tailored, multi-sectorial interventions. Such interventions must include the availability of academic tutoring, life coaches, vocational training, child care and after school activities for vulnerable boys and girls.

Effective juvenile justice reform in the region faces multiple challenges, including punitive, non-rehabilitative approaches to law enforcement, housing of juvenile offenders alongside adults, and general underfunding of juvenile justice systems. These factors, combined with the lack of rehabilitative and restorative programs, contribute to high rates of recidivism.[v] Further, all ESC nations have ratified the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and attempt to follow this rights-based approach. However, the costs of implementation and slow legislative processes impede reform. Gender-disaggregated crime data are not collected or analyzed, but, if they were, would likely improve resource allocation and the development of specific justice approaches that could address the challenges of boys and girls.

USAID recognizes that young men are more likely to be victims and perpetrators of violent crime; regional social norms create an environment in which violence and aggression are common means of resolving conflicts. Women in the ESC are highly susceptible to gender-based violence, sexual violence and domestic/family-based violence. ESC countries have higher than the global average for rape. However, a true picture of the prevalence of violence against women is hampered by under-reporting due to lack of confidence in the security and justice sectors, fear of retribution and social stigma.[vi]

USAID/ESC programming will address the challenges described above through targeted technical interventions to improve regional coordination on crime and violence prevention, reform juvenile justice systems, and enhance workforce development, education, and community-based social crime prevention initiatives. The target demographic is at-risk youth, which USAID defines as "youth who face environmental, social and family conditions that hinder their personal development and their successful

integration into society as productive citizens."[vii] USAID will strengthen community resilience, enhance social cohesion and create opportunities for youth to become productive members of their communities.

USAID/ESC will assess the achievement of success in the foregoing areas by way of the following indicators:

Development Objective Indicators

- Number of crimes involving youth, disaggregated by victims and perpetrators
- Citizen perception of security
- Youth positively engage their communities as employed, educated and supportive
- Proportion of target population reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic and political opportunities

Intermediate Results (IR) 1.1: Regional coordination on crime prevention increased

While developing the first generation of its CBSI programs, the mission undertook several assessments on youth, insecurity and the juvenile justice system. These highlighted the lack of standardized community, national and regional data on crime, violence and their drivers. There is insufficient regularly collected, cross-country-comparable data on issues such as: age groups involved in crime and violence; gender disaggregated information on crime involvement; educational attainment; incidents of crime (violent and non-violent, including drug use and geographical distribution); perception of insecurity; employment status; household income and expenditures; attitudes towards the government, particularly police; corruption; juvenile justice; and the availability of social services. The absence of such data inhibits planning and sharing of best practices for crime prevention, resulting in inefficiencies as several countries attempt to pilot the same approaches without information indicating effectiveness. This weakens the ability of governments, communities and the non-governmental sector to prevent the spread of insecurity.

USAID's focus will be on building the institutional capacity of its partners to enable the development of formalized regular collection and analysis of standardized crime data at the community, national and regional levels. To increase the availability of and access to crime-related data, and the ability to use data to inform decision making, technical assistance will enhance the capacity of police, policymakers, communities, academia and service providers to gather, interpret and utilize data to design and implement initiatives to prevent and reduce crime. In the first year of the RDCS, USAID/ESC will cooperate with the Regional Security System (RSS), an intergovernmental organization focused on the defense and security of the Eastern Caribbean region, as well as CARICOM, to collect and analyze uniform crime statistics. USAID/ESC's efforts will also include support to academia and think-tanks to implement tested methodologies for surveys, polling and academic reports. All data collected by these organizations will be made available to Member States. USAID implementing partners will regularly collect data at the community level and distribute information to key stakeholders and facilitate the sharing of best practices. Where appropriate, the mission intends to pilot an initiative utilizing social media platforms and mobile technology to increase the collection and availability of data and improve understanding of the importance of gender disaggregation for policy and strategy development.

Indicators

- Number of institutions collecting and analyzing crime statistics
- Number regional-level crime prevention initiatives informed by evidence/data
- Level of inter-country multi-country criminal activity

Intermediate Result 1.2: Criminal justice system alternatives for youth offenders increased

Youth in conflict with the law in the ESC are particularly vulnerable. Justice systems struggle to shift approaches to focus on rehabilitative and restorative rather than retributive punishment of juvenile and youth offenders. All ESC countries are bound by international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), to implement appropriate measures to protect the rights of juveniles. Despite significant effort across the region, much remains to be done to ensure acceptable measures are in place. A recent juvenile justice assessment found that, despite rising levels of delinquency, law enforcement and judicial actors receive inadequate training for dealing with juveniles and youth.[viii] The gender-specific needs of boys and girls are not always understood. Examination of juvenile justice and penal systems found many young people languishing in juvenile detention centers or alongside adults in jails and prisons. Incarceration of juveniles puts them at increased risk of recidivism due to limited rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities. Placing juveniles in adult facilities, in close contact with more experienced adult convicts, often results in their deeper involvement with criminality. It also exposes juveniles to the risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse that can lead to psychosocial and health problems.

Rehabilitative initiatives aim to build capacity of offenders to re-enter society with pro-social behaviors and skills necessary to find work. Restorative justice approaches, virtually non-existent in the region, are effective means to repair and sustain the family and community networks that support healthy societies. Justice systems require legislation, policies and procedures to establish and implement the concepts and components of rehabilitation and restorative justice. Awareness by magistrates, judges and other officials of alternative sentencing options and the types of support services available for youth and their families should be increased to promote provision of modern justice to juveniles.

USAID will promote the modernization of justice systems across the ESC to provide alternatives to incarceration. Technical assistance to reform national and regional policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks will support the identification of best practices in juvenile justice provision, alternative sentencing and community intervention programs. Justice sector actors and other stakeholders will receive training to improve professionalization of key personnel, develop revised processes for treatment of juvenile offenders, and support juveniles detained in or diverted from detention centers. The mission will engage regional partners to examine challenges, identify best practices and develop regional standards. Differences in approaches to the provision of justice to boys and girls will be examined and used to inform policy development. A key component of USAID's initiatives will be supporting compliance with implementation of the UN CRC and other international obligations. National governments will receive tailored assistance to address each country's specific reform and technical needs. At the local level, USAID will work in partnership with communities and service providers to strengthen the rehabilitative, restorative and re-integrative initiatives that support youth who have been in conflict with the law, bearing in mind the different challenges specific to boys and girls.

<u>Indicators</u>

- Number of offenders processed using diversion/alternative sentencing programs as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by juvenile (18 and under) and youth (19-24) offenders
- Number of countries that show progress against a checklist based on the UN CRC
- Recidivism rates among juvenile (under 18 and between 19-24) offenders
- Diverted offenders who assume positive roles in their communities

Intermediate Result 1.3: The ability of youths and communities to reduce crime and violence increased

Youth across the Caribbean region face significant challenges in becoming positive contributing members of their communities. The USAID/ESC Youth Assessment (2013) found that "the most influential societal systems - economic, social support and educational - are not adequately meeting the needs of Caribbean youth. Structural deficiencies in these systems, paired with the dual challenges of an increasingly prominent drug trade and a prolonged economic recession, have led to a regional crisis. The corresponding effects - an uncertain socioeconomic climate and wide-ranging concerns regarding crime and violence - have in turn put additional strain on social structures and citizen security."[ix]

A multiplicity of factors determines the degree to which youth are exposed to "risk," including education, health, living conditions, and others. A recent Inter-American Development Bank article reported that alcohol and drug abuse, early and/or unprotected sex, low academic performance, school desertion, crime and high levels of community violence are prevalent risk factors among ESC youth.[x]

Although ESC countries spend a relatively high percentage of GDP on education,[xi] many students drop out before completing secondary school or leave school with poor academic skills. The absence of these foundational skills limits personal psychosocial development as well as opportunities for employment.[xii] In support of CBSI, in 2011 USAID piloted workforce development activities in several ESC countries. Results indicate that linkages between the education system and labor markets are poorly developed, resulting in unemployment while jobs remain vacant. Once the assessments were completed, USAID initiated activities to strengthen these linkages and will continue this work.

Workforce development initiatives, informed by pilot activities, will continue to provide life and vocational skills training, develop a culture of entrepreneurship among Caribbean youth, and match youth with employment opportunities. USAID will build on these activities by working with marginalized communities to develop multifaceted crime and violence prevention interventions that provide community cohesion-building, psychosocial support, and safe and constructive recreation. Gender considerations, including access to education and training programs and child care, will be introduced. USAID will engage with a wide range of stakeholders to improve trust between communities and police, governmental actors, civil society, service providers and the private sector. To enhance the impact of these activities, social support services and networks, particularly referral services, will be strengthened. Opportunities to promote community-oriented policing practices will be pursued, where appropriate. Crime-relevant data and statistics will be collected at the community level as part of the national and regional effort to increase availability of evidence.

USAID/ESC will also implement activities in line with the USAID education strategy through the provision of funds to the OECS Secretariat, which will cooperate with respective ministries of education to support improved quality of learning at the primary school level. Specifically, reading skills development will be addressed through the delivery of programs that will include improved teaching methods and standards for curriculum development and performance assessments.

<u>Indicators</u>

- Number of youth enrolled in formal school, second-chance education, or work
- Number of vulnerable communities engaged in multifaceted crime prevention planning
- Proportion of population perceiving crime as a desirable income option
- Proportion of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)

Illustrative Activities for Development Objective1

- Strengthening statistical database systems in the region to support crime prevention through technical assistance to regional, national and local organizations to collect and analyze standardized data on crime and violence.
- Assisting service providers to ensure that juveniles/youth released from detention will continue receiving follow-up services to help them fully reintegrate into their communities.
- Implementing community-based crime prevention initiatives that will work with community leaders, government officials, police, the private sector, youth groups and social service providers to identify the underlying triggers of crime and violence and plan multifaceted interventions to prevent it.
- Ensuring that workforce development program graduates are able to find jobs in their chosen fields through workforce development training and employability skills support for youth that will focus on matching job skills training to market needs
- Improving pedagogical approaches to strengthen early reading programs and prevent dropouts through technical support to ministries of education.

Sustainability

USAID/ESC crime prevention initiatives will build regional, local and community capacity to address development challenges through the collection of data, analysis of best practices and forging of relationships between and among national government officials and constituent communities. Training in policy development based on quality-produced data strengthens communities' ability to engage officials on the necessity of crime prevention and the capacity of governments to analyze citizen proposals as well as to direct resources to address urgent needs. By strengthening the availability and access to information and developing evidence-based best practices USAID/ESC promotes an environment where communities, policymakers and government officials have the skills and knowledge to solve issues themselves using local resources. Improved pedagogy focusing on primary-level reading and mathematics build the essential foundational skills for Caribbean youth to succeed in the marketplace.

Science and Technology

The geographic spread of the mission's eastern and southern countries increases economic costs. The high costs of operation are a significant barrier to maintaining up to date awareness of best practices. Debt servicing requires increasing amounts of government resources, leading to minimized budgets for the provision of social services and staff training. USAID/ESC intends to leverage the relatively high levels of Internet and telecommunication connectivity in the region to promote and strengthen the collection and availability of data using social media platforms. Crime statistics collected at the community level will be made available to government and other officials to inform decision making on crime prevention resource allocation and shared via social media as appropriate.

Donor Coordination

USAID/ESC will coordinate efforts with other agencies whose mandates cover work in this area as illustrated below:

- the World Bank supports skills training programs in Saint Lucia and Grenada;
- DFATD supports the development and strengthening of community colleges;
- the OAS provides job skills and business development training;

- the EU funds business development, technical and vocational training across the region and
- UNICEF juvenile justice reform efforts focus on the modernization of existing justice system rather than the introduction of alternative sentencing methods.

USAID/ESC will focus crime prevention resources using data collected by USAID implementing partners and regional security and development bodies, including the Regional Security System, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNDP, IDB, CDB, the World Bank and national governments. Crime statistics, including intentional homicide count and rate per 100,000 population, national and local level property crime rates, incidents of community-level crime reported by citizens, and drug/narcotics-related crimes, will be analyzed in combination with the Gini coefficient, debt levels/service requirements, and youth unemployment rates to determine the most effective use of funds. Several of these data points will be collected using standardized processes during the strategy period, and the mission will adjust programming focus and crime prevention assistance provided to each country should the collected data indicate changes in the situation on the ground.

Lessons Learned

Crime and Violence Prevention/Youth Development. While data collection and analysis represent a major challenge throughout the portfolio as noted above, there is a marked lack of quantitative information available on crime and violence in the ESC region, particularly for the OECS countries, which constrains the mission's ability to promote regional coordination and design effective citizen security interventions. While there are many similarities among ESC countries, particularly the six OECS countries, there are also many notable differences among them. While USAID/ESC has programmatic experience and anecdotal evidence that help clarify these disparities, more detailed, standardized statistical evidence is required to identify the specific factors affecting crime and violence rates in each country. Currently, crime statistics on every indicator other than homicides are lacking or incomplete, and what exists is neither regionally standardized nor comparable across countries. Homicide rates are the most commonly used proxy for insecurity due to availability, reliability and a tendency to track with other violent crime rates, but in order to design more effective citizen security programs the mission must better understand other factors including firearm possession; rates of non-violent crime such as property crime and drug possession; socioeconomic status of perpetrators and victims of crime and violence; size, resources, and professionalism of police forces; and citizen perception of security. To address these needs, USAID/ESC will support capacity-building for existing regional, national, and community-based organizations to enable them to standardize data across ESC countries and then collect and analyze the data for use by all regional stakeholders.

> Most OECS countries' homicide rates have followed an upward trend over the past 10-15 years. Some saw an astronomic rise – particularly Dominica, with a 662 percent increase in homicide rates from 2000-2010, and St. Kitts and Nevis, with a 487 percent increase. However, Antigua and Barbuda only saw an increase of 6 percent over this period; its homicide rate peaked in 2007, and then declined abruptly in 2010 to near-2000 levels. Grenada's homicide rate remained relatively stable over the same time, with a total decrease of 22 percent from 2000 to 2010.

Expanding Beyond Juvenile Justice Reform to Reach More Youth Involved in Crime. USAID/ESC is making significant headway in the area of juvenile justice reform. As news of successful activities

spreads across the region, additional host country governments are requesting support. The mission has been working at the regional and national levels to design effective reform efforts both in policy and in practice. During this process, the mission has come to understand that to be most effective in preventing crime and violence, working only with juveniles (those 18 years of age and younger) does not reach the entire population of at-risk youth. USAID/ESC defines youth as ages 14-24, an age group most susceptible to becoming victims and/or perpetrators of violent crime. Scientific evidence also demonstrates that the brain is not fully developed, particularly in its ability to make good decisions and control impulses, until age 20-25, especially in young men. USAID/ESC therefore needs to look beyond juvenile justice systems toward the criminal justice system as a whole, working with police, magistrates, judges, prosecutors, prison administrators, and other law enforcement and justice sector actors to sensitize them to the specific needs of youth and to create policies and practices to encourage rehabilitation and reinsertion with the goal of reducing recidivism and therefore the overall crime and violence rate.

Focusing on Risk Factors beyond the Lack of Employment Opportunities. Raising youth employment rates is necessary but not sufficient to reducing and preventing crime and violence. Many risk factors are associated with youth susceptibility to becoming victims and perpetrators of crime and violence, including: exposure to violence in the home or community; societal tolerance of violence; drug and alcohol abuse; early sexual debut; low social cohesion/distrust between neighbors; lack of adult role models, particularly male role models; family disorganization; attachment to anti-social peer groups and desire for group rewards such as status, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging; distrust of authorities, including the police; and many others in the social, familial, academic, peer, and individual spheres. In order to address these problems in a holistic manner, USAID will expand its work with youth beyond workforce development to include working with at-risk youth, their communities, and their families to develop integrated, multi-sectoral crime and violence prevention interventions designed to provide services such as second-chance education, workforce development, community cohesion-building, psychosocial support, safe and constructive recreation, and others. USAID will work with a wide range of stakeholders to improve trust and understanding between communities and police, governmental actors, civil society, service providers, and the private sector.

D. Development Objective 2: HIV/AIDS

Epidemic control of HIV/AIDS among key populations increased

The Caribbean as a region has the second highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the world after sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated adult prevalence rate of 1 percent and approximately 250,000 people currently living with HIV. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in this region is concentrated geographically with five out of the 11 countries covered by the PEPFAR Caribbean Regional Program (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Bahamas and Barbados) accounting for approximately 95 percent of all new HIV infections. Sexual transmission is the primary driver of the epidemic, with epidemiological and behavioral data suggesting concentrated epidemics among persons engaged in high-risk behaviors (PEHRBs) relative to the general population. These PEHRBs are represented by specific groups, including men having sex with men (MSM), sex workers, their clients, and those engaged in transactional sex. Specific key population data in the region are limited; however where reliable statistics are available, prevalence rates among these target groups are among the highest in the world. In Jamaica, for example, HIV prevalence among MSM is 32.8 percent. In Suriname, the MSM and Commercial Sex Worker (CSW) prevalence rates are 6.7 percent and 24 percent respectively. While the Guyana PEPFAR program is not part of the Caribbean Regional PEPFAR Program, it is part of the USAID/ESC Health and HIV/AIDS portfolio and has similar epidemic dynamics with MSM and CSWs being the primary drivers of new HIV infections. While the overall HIV prevalence rate in Guyana is 1.3 percent the rate among MSM is close to 20 percent and among CSW is approximately 17 percent.

Within the Caribbean region and Guyana, key populations (KPs) face widespread stigma and discrimination that increase their vulnerability to and transmission of HIV. Dominant gender norms around masculinity and sexuality place MSM, transgender individuals, and CSWs at increased risk for HIV. Stigma and gender-based violence against these groups (including blackmail, homophobic violence, and rape) often drives these groups underground. It is estimated that approximately 80 percent of MSM in the region, for example, are in heterosexual relationships and are thus characterized as "hidden" and extremely hard to reach. This environment significantly limits KPs' ability to negotiate safe sexual practices, protect themselves from abuse, and gain access to appropriate prevention, care and treatment services. Other elements of the environment that facilitate the further spread of HIV in the region are the high rate of sexual tourism and generally low socio-economic status among KPs, which perpetuates commercial and transactional sexual exchange as a means of survival. Cross-border mobility and movement of vulnerable populations from higher HIV prevalence countries (such as Haiti) to neighboring islands seeking economic opportunity similarly challenges efforts to control the epidemic in the Caribbean.

To date, the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Caribbean Regional Program has been guided by the Partnership Framework Strategy and Implementation Plan (2010-2014), a strategic framework through which all United States Government support is aligned to the goal and objectives of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework and national efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. This partnership represents extensive collaboration between the USG, the Caribbean Community and its Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Through this partnership, significant progress has been made. For example, PEPFAR investments contributed to a 49 percent drop in new HIV infections in the Caribbean, and close to half of treatment eligible persons living with HIV/AIDS have now initiated treatment according to UNAIDS. Notably, elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV has largely been achieved across the region, with the exceptions of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The PEPFAR Guyana program has also achieved significant success and

is poised to fully transition HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment programming to the Government of Guyana by 2017.

Despite these successes, the impact of the regional HIV response has been limited by a disproportionately small amount of resources being invested in interventions specifically targeting KPs. To continue to make progress in epidemic control, the full HIV/AIDS response will need to prioritize and ensure that highly stigmatized and hidden KPs have the same access to supportive and clinical care and treatment services as any other Caribbean citizen. The sustainability of HIV/AIDS epidemic control in the Caribbean and Guyana is dependent on regional and country partners leading, managing and financing high-impact, strategic interventions targeting KPs to increase viral load suppression and decrease onward transmission of the virus.

The PEPFAR Caribbean Regional Program is now in its final year of implementation, and the regional PEPFAR USG team has engaged with its national and regional partners to support the development of the new Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS (CRSF) 2014-2018. The new CRSF strongly endorses the epidemic control paradigm and strategically focuses programming on the main drivers of the epidemic both in terms of KPs and the geographic concentration of new HIV infections. As the partnership framework comes to a close, USAID/ESC will technically and geographically re-align its HIV/AIDS program to support the new CRSF and will capitalize on the strengths and successes of the partnership framework to accelerate achievement of epidemic control in the region. Specifically, USAID/ESC will invest more resources in programming to increase utilization and quality of a core package of prevention, care and treatment services by KPs. USAID/ESC will expand core HIV/AIDS programming in countries with the highest burden of disease and incidence of new HIV infection. Priority countries, or first-tier countries, for this model are Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname, where 83 percent of new infections and 80 percent of people living with HIV (PLHIV) reside. Second-tier priority countries include Barbados and the Bahamas, where another 12 percent of new infections are emerging, and third-tier countries include the six OECS countries responsible for 5 percent of new infections regionally. Over the life of the RDCS, HIV/AIDS program resources will be shifted toward higher priority countries, better positioning the region to approach the CRSF 2014-2018 goal of an "AIDS-Free Caribbean."

The Guyana PEPFAR program is guided by its recently revised Transition Plan 2014-2018 that aligns closely with the technical and programmatic priorities of the CRSF and shifts focus from an emergency response to sustainability and country ownership. Specifically, it is guided by the National HIV Strategic Plan (HIVision 2020) and prioritizes KP prevention, care and treatment programming. Close partnership with the Guyanese government and coordination with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) will be essential to successfully building sustainability of KP programming targeted geographically within Guyana to increase utilization, improve quality and strengthen the enabling environment for epidemic control in that country. USAID/ESC will also further support increased collaboration between Guyanese and Caribbean and Latin American regional authorities.

Development Objective Indicators

- Number of new HIV infections compared to the previous year
- Percentage of new HIV-positive individuals retained in care 12 months after initiating ART
- Number of AIDS-related deaths as compared to the previous year

Intermediate Result 2.1: Utilization of prevention, care and treatment services by key populations increased

The Caribbean region has made progress towards its goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. In 2013 UNAIDS reported that the most pronounced decline in new infections since 2001 (49 percent) had occurred in the Caribbean, a region which had also successfully extended anti-retroviral therapy (ART) to approximately 67 percent of treatment-eligible Caribbean people by 2011. Despite these gains, there still remains much to be done to adequately address the existing coverage gaps and achieve greater epidemic control, specifically for KPs. Support to address these gaps includes targeted, evidence-based, programmatic interventions for scaling up national-level efforts to improve the utilization, access and availability of services to address the needs of KPs. Intervention strategies are specifically designed to increase the number of individuals who know their HIV status through HIV testing and counseling; linking HIV positive individuals to care and treatment services; increasing the number of individuals who receive quality, positive, health, dignity and prevention services, and improving retention and treatment adherence. For effective and sustainable epidemic control in the Caribbean region and Guyana, it is essential that quality services are available and accessible by means that can be scaled, including improved referrals and linkages across the prevention, care and treatment continuum using both community and clinic-based services.

Complicating response efforts, national governments within the region have not systematically developed relationships with the private sector and civil society stakeholders to coordinate response capacity. By leveraging the strengths of civil society, private sector actors and government entities, the systemic response will be improved and better targeted to KPs. USAID/ESC will seek to improve the capacity of Caribbean governments and civil society, through facilitating greater coordination and collaboration, to manage effectively and sustain the delivery of quality, innovative HIV prevention, care, treatment and support services at regional, national and community levels. It is essential that these services be evidence-based, gender sensitive, and non-discriminatory and that they reduce the structural and physical barriers impeding access by key populations.

USAID/ESC will provide technical assistance to broaden the use of innovative science and technology as a medium for improving risk reduction efforts and health seeking behavior of KPs and for improving program management. The successful increase in the uptake of services will require partnership between relevant stakeholders to ensure a bi-directional referral link between community-based outreach and support services with clinical care and treatment services. It is imperative that approaches capitalize on the advances made in mobile and other technology platforms and social networking media to stay relevant to the increasingly sophisticated client base at the core of the region's concentrated epidemic.

To effectively eliminate structural barriers limiting access by KPs and PLHIV to prevention, treatment, care and support services, USAID/ESC will work with both the formal health care delivery system and civil society stakeholders. To improve epidemic control, it is critical that those most in need of services can gain access to them without the fear of violence, loss of confidentiality, or discrimination. Efforts need to engage all stakeholders, including those in the formal health system alongside civil society and faith-based partners. First, the program will work to ensure that there are stronger partnerships between health care providers and other stakeholders in the provision of confidential, non-discriminatory services in support of KPs across the continuum of HIV services. Second, USAID will support efforts to combat stigma and discrimination at the community level by building leadership and advocacy capacity of organizations working with and linking KPs.

Indicators

- Number of individuals who received HIV testing and counseling (HTC) services for HIV and received their test results
- Number of HIV-positive adults newly enrolled in clinical care during the reporting period
- Number of PLHIV accessing positive health and dignity services

Intermediate Result 2.2: Quality of a core package of prevention, care and treatment services for key populations improved

Strengthening and rapid scale-up of patient-centered care and applications of innovative technological and other approaches to KP service delivery will facilitate the dramatic strategic shift and flexibility required to put this region on a path to achieve an AIDS-free generation.

To support this, USAID will partner with national and regional governments to assist in the identification of common gaps in service quality that negatively impact the effectiveness of the HIV/AIDS response. USAID will partner with these entities to strengthen and harmonize KP service delivery guidelines and standards that prioritize high-impact, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive service provision. The mission will focus attention on the factors that result in loss of KP and PLHIV along the continuum of core prevention, care, and treatment services. Central to this effort will be to standardize quality-assurance protocols to ensure strong monitoring of KP service delivery and to facilitate early and sustained corrective measures to overcome existing barriers to access, use and retention of KP and PLHIV in the service delivery continuum. In Guyana, a major focus of quality assurance programming will be to build the sustainability of supply chain management system and the capacity of health service delivery systems to effectively and efficiently link PKs to the services they need and retain them in integrated HIV/AIDS programs that optimize health outcomes and viral load suppression for reduced infectivity. This will focus on operation systems to maintain high quality service delivery despite severe human resource constraints.

USAID will also work closely with civil society, including KP and KP PLHIV networks, to build capacity at both community sites and health facilities to deliver high quality services. This will require strengthening a patient-centered approach to service delivery and care and working with affected individuals to successfully manage their own care and treatment. Success will require management of chronic diseases to not only meet clients' health needs but also to help them develop the skills needed to manage their diseases and stop onward transmission of the virus. It will also demand strengthened support of non-clinical needs and psycho-social support, which has tremendous impact on KP and KP PLHIV's ability to maintain their health, reduce the likelihood of developing resistance to first and second line anti-retroviral therapy, and achieve viral suppression. USAID will focus its support on entities that have gained the trust of KP populations and are preferred access points of these populations. USAID will also focus on strengthening the linkage and referral systems between these and other essential HIV/AIDS service delivery points and between health facilities and communities. Through focused capacity building of local entities in the region, USAID will maximize its investment across the continuum of care to strengthen the delivery of high-impact support services for key populations. These measures will ensure that current and future investments in the HIV/AIDS response effectively and efficiently achieve sustainable epidemic control in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean.

Indicators

- Number of new targeted KP quality assurance standards and protocols developed
- Percentage of adults known to be alive and on treatment 12 months after initiation of ART

- Percentage of people on ART tested for viral load with a viral load below 1000 after 12 months of therapy

Intermediate Result 2.3: Enabling environment for the delivery of sustainable HIV/AIDS services improved

The top two strategic priority areas of the CRSF 2014-2018 are: 1) an enabling environment, and 2) sustainability. The strategic framework affirms that regional and national leaders have a shared responsibility and are mutually accountable to one another for an enabling environment that strengthens effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the regional HIV/AIDS response. It also sets the agenda for strong regional partnership and cooperation with Caribbean leaders working closely with donors and other stakeholders to set strategic programmatic direction align resources and optimize investments for maximum impact. The Guyana HIVision 2020 and PEPFAR Transition Plan also prioritize elements of the enabling environment that are essential to the GOG's ability to increase their financial support to the HIV/AIDS response and achieve full ownership by 2017.

The Caribbean region faces significant religious, sociocultural and normative gender constructs driving and perpetuating a high level of stigma and discrimination that significantly limits access to appropriate and high quality prevention, care and treatment services by key populations. This is also true in Guyana. Homosexuality is criminalized in the majority of islands with punishments as extreme as life imprisonment existing in penal codes of several nations. While these laws are not strictly enforced, they do represent what some have termed "state sponsored stigma and discrimination" and represent wide-reaching and entrenched barriers to key populations' access to and use of services. Since political and religious leaders across the region have been reluctant to aggressively tackle this issue, national HIV/AIDS responses have been predominantly focused on the general population and on other, more socially acceptable "at risk" groups such as youth. The disproportionate scale, coverage and quality of key-population HIV/AIDS programming is a critical factor limiting the impact and sustainability of the HIV/AIDS response in the region. The CRSF articulates strong commitment to removing legal, social and cultural barriers that limit key populations most at risk from accessing comprehensive and high quality HIV/AIDS and health services.

To achieve sustainable epidemic control within the Caribbean region and Guyana, all facets of the response will need to prioritize and ensure that highly stigmatized and hidden key populations have the same access to supportive and clinical care and treatment services as any other Caribbean citizen. USAID/ESC will contribute to a strengthened enabling environment by supporting national and regional partners to implement reforms to the legislative framework currently at odds with the inclusive rights-based approach that is necessary for success. USAID/ESC will strengthen its support of national and regional governments to develop and implement policy frameworks and guidelines that ensure value for money and focus investments on increasing use and quality of the continuum of HIV prevention, care and treatment among KPs. Specifically, USAID will continue to support government partners to develop sustainability plans and investment frameworks and will build capacity to use these tools for mobilizing public and private funding streams to meet the fiscal requirements of the new CRSF. In addition, USAID will support a robust agenda for collaboration, learning and adapting by identifying, documenting, disseminating local solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of KP HIV/AIDS programming. USAID will similarly support south-to-south exchanges and learning to accelerate the adoption and scale-up of proven KP programming and the use of mobile and other technological innovations that increase access to and retention in the continuum of KP HIV/AIDS services. In Guyana sustainability is priority number one and USAID support will strengthen political ownership and stewardship of the response while ensuring that KPs retain access to integrated prevention, care and treatment services.

USAID/ESC will harness regional partnerships to support national and regional government partners to advocate for and set strategic programmatic direction and build their capacity to coordinate multiple investments for maximum impact. The principle aim of USAID's increased focus on partnership will be to accelerate the scale-up of epidemic control models through increased investment in evidence-based KP programming. USAID will continue to work closely with key regional partners such as PANCAP to facilitate transnational advocacy, partnership and south-to-south learning to tackle the primary drivers of the Caribbean region's HIV/AIDS epidemic. Key to USAID's HIV/AIDs strategy will be to provide technical assistance to national and regional governments in support of successful funding applications to the Global Fund. USAID will also coordinate closely with the Global Fund in order to help countries within the region mitigate the potential negative impact of reduced bilateral and multi-lateral donor HIV/AIDS funding. Close coordination with the implementation of the grants from the Global Fund in Guyana will be essential to ensure successful transition of the program over to the government by 2017.

Indicators:

- Number of HIV/AIDS structural reforms operationalized
- Number of structural reforms mitigating HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination of KPs
- Percentage of stakeholder budgets allocated to KP HIV/AIDS programming

Illustrative Activities for DO2

- Expanding and improving the targeting of HIV prevention, care and treatment efforts using a combination of effective, rights-based, gender-sensitive, evidence-informed approaches to address vulnerability at the individual, community, and structural levels;
- Using science and technology across the continuum to increase uptake of prevention care and treatment services by key populations
- Supporting national and regional partners to implement and evaluate stigma reduction programs and their impact on overall use and quality of KP services across the continuum in priority countries;

Sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of achieving an AIDS-free generation and an AIDS-free Caribbean. The underlying premise of both the PEPFAR Blueprint and the CRSF 2014-2018 is that by significantly reducing new infections, through both behavior and biomedical prevention measures and through PLHIV viral load suppression achieved via ART, the cost of the HIV/AIDS response will decrease and become more sustainable. Sustainability is fundamentally tied to increased use of high-quality HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services by populations most at risk of HIV infection and of transmitting the virus to their partners. In the Caribbean region, it is, therefore, imperative to support the rapid scale-up of high-impact, key-population programming that links these individuals to the services they require to achieve epidemic control and ultimately save lives.

Central to this effort is mobilization of public and private resources for these efforts and smart investments in high-impact, key-population, core HIV/AIDS services. In addition, in order to facilitate smart investments, it is essential to tackle the widespread and entrenched stigma and discrimination that decreases access to and effective use of these services. Simultaneously, strong partnerships between government, academia, public and private stakeholders and donors must produce the scientific evidence that informs smart investments and sustainability planning. National governments and regional inter-governmental institutions must then strengthen their systematic use of health sciences – including sustainable health financing – to direct and oversee optimal resources allocation for the Caribbean

HIV/AIDS epidemic.

USAID will work with national governments and key regional institutions to support increased use of high-quality HIV/AIDS services by key populations with particular focus on countries in which the highest numbers of new infections are occurring (Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Barbados and Bahamas). It will ensure strong technical assistance to the OECS countries through its support of the OECS Commission to mobilize domestic resources through high-level policy and planning dialogue and to leverage global resources including the Global Fund. Country ownership and leadership of national and regional HIV/AIDS responses is fundamental to more successful and sustainable epidemic control and USAID is committed to supporting this principle across the full spectrum of its HIV/AIDS program. In Guyana the sustainability agenda is grounded in four dimensions of country ownership; political ownership and stewardship, institutional and community ownership, capacity and mutual accountability including sustainable financing.

Science and Technology

Science, technology and innovation are being harnessed across the globe to modernize the way health services are delivered, reaching more people, reducing cost and improving outcomes. The PEPFAR Blueprint and CRSF 2014-2018 demand significant programmatic shifts and geographic focus based on sound scientific evidence to achieve epidemic control and set countries on a path that ultimately will lead to an AIDS-free generation. This end-goal can be achieved much more quickly in the Caribbean with the rapid expansion of technological advances and programmatic innovations that increase the health sectors ability to target key populations with high-quality and appropriate HIV/AIDS core services increasing use of these services and facilitating life-long commitment and adherence to complex care and treatment regimes that will enable PLHIV to live longer, healthier and more productive lives while reducing their likelihood of transmitting the virus to their sexual partners.

Examples of how science, technology and innovation are modernizing HIV/AIDS responses include the use of mobile phones to transmit key information about preventing and managing HIV related illnesses, alerts reminding PLHIV to take their medication and/or come in for follow-on care visits, and support for community health workers through support call centers where a more skilled provider can be reached with questions/concerns regarding a patients care and treatment. The potential of such applications is extraordinary and will necessarily play a critical role in Caribbean national and regional HIV/AIDS responses. USAID will harness this potential across its HIV/AIDS program to tackle stigma and discrimination that results in decreased and inconsistent use of core HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services by key populations and to improve the quality of these services through job-aid and other applications supporting community and facility based service providers. USAID will also strengthen identification and documentation of successful applications of science, technology and innovation in HIV/AIDS epidemic control efforts across the Caribbean facilitating rapid-scale up of successful local solutions and pilots.

Donor Coordination

Donor coordination and collaboration have been fundamental elements of the Caribbean regional response to addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Bilateral and multilateral support has been critical to achieving the successes noted thus far in mitigating the impact of the disease and the significant scale-up in the ability of national governments to implement effective HIV prevention, care, treatment and support services. Governments within the region have relied heavily on external donor support since 2001 with the initiation of PANCAP and the first CRSF (2002-2006). Commitments from an array of bilateral governments including PEPFAR, the World Bank, the Global Fund, the Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative, UNAIDS and other multilateral partners, have all contributed to national and regional efforts to mitigate HIV/AIDS. Since 2008, there has been a significant decline in the levels of donor funding on account of the global economic crisis and the transitioning of focus to other social and development priorities.

Despite the reduction in donor support, many countries in the region remain extensively dependent on external donor resources to finance key aspects of their response, specifically the provision of ART. Health sector reform efforts to integrate HIV/AIDS services, rationalize human resources for health, modernize and enhance systems and services and improve efficiencies are all critical to ensuring that investments in the HIV/AIDS response are maximized and sustained over time. As external financing declines and numbers of people requiring treatment increase, governments will be challenged to identify budgetary flexibility for additional investments in HIV without compromising fiscal stability and their ability to address other competing priorities, such as chronic non-communicable diseases, which carry a heavier burden of disease. The financing needs of the HIV response will remain substantial for many years to come, as few countries will be able to fully fund their HIV response without international assistance. To sustain advancements, the results of the AIDS response must be an impetus for increasing investments, not decreasing them. This is particularly true in Guyana which will need to carefully measure progress towards full transition of the HIV/AIDS response and ensure that funding is not reduced too drastically too soon.

Currently, PEPFAR and the Global Fund are the major extra-regional contributors to the national HIV/AIDS programs in the region. PEPFAR programs are being requested to leverage their country resources with those of the Global Fund and seek to ensure maximum impact of these combined resources. The Global Fund's reclassification of Caribbean countries into the "Country Band 4" will decrease Global Fund's financial contribution in the region. PEPFAR coordinates program activities with the Global Fund and serves on regional and country coordinating mechanisms to ensure planning is taking place together. Under this new scenario there is potential for slower progress or a reversal of some advances made in country's HIV/AIDS program's progress. This shift is forcing national governments to take stronger ownership of their HIV/AIDS programs through increased financial support, leadership and program management. Another critical point to note is that, while the epidemic is concentrated within the key populations, governments have continued to focus their HIV efforts on the general population, and this has created a significant gap in the response. The donors have been filling this gap. Close coordination with GFATM in Guyana, especially in light of its new funding model, which will result in smaller-than-projected investments in Guyana, will be essential to successful transition.

Lessons Learned

Despite impressive gains in stemming the tide of HIV/AIDS in the region, much remains to be done to achieve the CRSF 2014-2018 goal of an AIDS-free Caribbean. Further progress in epidemic control will only be achieved through a more focused and concentrated response that serves the needs of key populations currently driving the epidemic and prioritizes joint action and mutual accountability for optimal programmatic and geographic resource allocation. With available donor funding decreasing across the region, it is imperative that national and regional governments and leaders redouble their

efforts to mobilize both domestic and global resources. They must also strengthen their commitment to joint action and accountability for excellence in evidence-based HIV/AIDS programming, strong quality assurance policies and guidelines, and the legal and regulatory reform required to increase use of and retention in high-quality HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services. Sustainability of the response is fully dependent on country and regional ownership, and Caribbean leaders themselves must take the lead in coordinating smart investment of resources across all stakeholders to optimize successful execution of the CRSF 2014-2018. This will require strong political, religious and community leadership to overcome the strong barriers related to widespread and entrenched stigma and discrimination. It will require multi-sector dialogue and advocacy in order to re-orient responses that have been too heavily focused on the general population and thus ineffective and inefficient in controlling the epidemic.

E. Development Objective 3: Adaptation to Global Climate Change

Negative impact of climate change on vulnerable populations and natural assets reduced

Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the Caribbean today, impacting economic growth, food security, public health, and livelihoods, especially for poor and vulnerable communities. In recent remarks, Secretary of State Kerry said, "Climate change can now be considered another weapon of mass destruction, perhaps the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction." [xiii] Climate change-induced droughts, floods, extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surges, warming air and sea surface temperatures, and ocean acidification are predicted to worsen in the coming decades, contributing to food and water shortages, increases in diseases, damage to economic infrastructure, and degradation of natural resources upon which livelihoods depend. Adapting to the impacts of climate change is essential for national security, sustainable development and community well-being in the Caribbean.[xiv]

The negative impacts of climate change disproportionately affect the poorest communities and most vulnerable countries. In the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, small island developing states (SIDS) are among the most vulnerable worldwide, with climate change impacts already threatening community and economic health in significant ways.[xv] The economies of Eastern and Southern Caribbean countries rely heavily on tourism and agriculture, both of which depend on favorable weather conditions and productive natural resources. Much of the infrastructure in each country (except for Guyana and Suriname) is located in the coastal zone, where most of the population lives and works, and where it is exposed to storm surge and coastal flooding.

In recent years, the region has experienced more severe drought conditions, reducing the amount of fresh water available for drinking and agriculture, and increasing the frequency and severity of bush fires. Sea level is predicted to rise by up to four feet this century[xvi], increasing damage to coastal infrastructure and communities from flooding and storm surges. Valued assets already close to the mean high tide line may become permanently inundated, affecting tourism and those who are reliant on it. Higher seas combined with overuse of freshwater supplies may result in saltwater intrusion into aquifers; further reducing water supplies available for human consumption and food protection. Precipitation patterns are expected to continue the recent trend toward fewer rainy days and heavier precipitation events, causing more frequent and severe flooding in areas with insufficient storm water drainage.

Choices made today affect the adaptive capacity and resilience of each country and too often result in greater climate change vulnerabilities. It is therefore critical that policies, strategies and actions of host countries be examined and adjusted to reflect climate change considerations and to strengthen resilience. USAID has an important role to play in supporting these efforts and in strengthening the understanding of how climate change affects the industries where men and women work. Understanding the negative impacts on fishing, agriculture, and tourism, where many men work, and on the tourism and other service sectors which employ many women, is critical to supporting a smooth and effective adaptation process.

<u>DO Indicators</u>**:**

- Value of assets (e.g., infrastructure, roads) built/rehabilitated according to climate-resilient codes and standards
- Number of hectares (e.g., agriculture land, coastline) under new or improved climate resilient management

Intermediate Result 3.1: Use of climate science and analysis for decision-making strengthened

According to USAID/ESC's Rapid Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (2013), one of the top priorities for USAID intervention is to improve the collection, analysis, distribution and use of reliable, current data related to climate change.[xvii] Most of the data currently available on climate change in the ten countries are collected sporadically and not used to inform legislation or funding priorities for public budgets. In order to effectively plan and implement actions to reduce climate change vulnerabilities and increase resilience, it is essential for the region to develop consistent and well-analyzed climate data. Additionally, improved climate data also need to be translated into informational products that clearly communicate findings and needed actions to diverse user groups. Such products may include early-alert notices and sector-specific forecasts that should be designed collaboratively with those who will use the information to ensure it supports effective decision making. The information products will be tailored to user groups in each community; ensuring that men and women of different age groups, occupation and disability both are considered discretely and can access and maximize the benefits from the information. At the local level, USAID will use climate data to provide practical information that will guide short- and medium-term decisions on issues like when and what crops to plant, what areas stand higher risk for drought or floods in the coming season, and related local level concerns.

In addition, climate data are critical to guide public and private investments like road building or port dredging. The data need to be developed and transmitted regularly to private investors in infrastructure and climate-sensitive sectors, as well as to government agencies that oversee public investments to ensure climate-sensitive decisions related to city planning, private sector development, agricultural extension service targeting and provision, and adaptation to climate change in general. Reliable data will also provide a better understanding of the different impacts that climate change has on men and women, supporting USAID and partners to design programs that more effectively engage men and women in building climate change resilience and in improving the understanding of the role that women play in social and economic transitions at the community level.

Indicators

- Number of people supported by the USG to cope with the effects of climate change.
- Number of individuals using climate change information and/or analysis in their decision-making
- Number of institutions using climate change information and/or analysis in their decision-making
- Number of individuals with increased capacity to adapt to climate change disaggregated by gender: (a) implementing risk-reduction measures, (b) using climate information in decision-making, and (c) with increased knowledge of CC impacts and actions

Intermediate Result 3.2 Resource management through adaptive strategies improved

Climate change is expected to aggravate current stresses facing vulnerable populations. The UNDP notes that climate change is likely to magnify existing patterns of gender disadvantage.[xviii] Women are often disproportionately affected by natural disasters and environmental stress, because of their gender roles and responsibilities, more restricted access to resources, muted voice in shaping decisions, and sometimes limited mobility. However, they can also be essential resource managers and agents of adaptation, and their knowledge and experience are often critical to community well-being and recovery. The failure to include women in decision-making processes, particularly those focused on climate change adaptation strategies, is likely to exacerbate inequalities and undermine the effectiveness of responses.

The focus on climate change is relatively recent for Caribbean countries, despite several past attempts to raise its profile among policy makers and donors. Stakeholders in the region have limited capacity to interpret climate science and make appropriate, informed decisions about adaptive measures to reduce impacts and increase resilience. USAID/ESC, in partnership with a broad array of Caribbean partners, will support the development of applicable climate-sensitive policies, the strengthening of critical adaptation capacities, and the building of innovative demonstration models that can be scaled up nationally and region-wide. Further, programming will seek to reduce the effects of climate change by mobilizing the private sector, civil society and academia to improve fresh water and coastal resource management practices in the region and to pilot new approaches that address climate change impacts.

Indicators:

- Number of laws, policies, or regulations addressing climate change adaptation officially proposed, adopted, or implemented
- Amount of investment leveraged in U.S. dollars, from private and public sources, for climate change adaptation
- Number of institutions demonstrating improved capacity to address climate change adaptation

Illustrative Activities for DO3

- Supporting the development and strengthening of policies and laws to reduce climate change vulnerabilities
- Increasing public awareness of climate change issues and promote greater citizen participation in decision-making to address its impacts
- Strengthening local, national and regional capacities for climate change adaptation, with a focus on water resources management and coastal zone management, to improve resilience in tourism, agricultural and fisheries sectors
- Conducting scalable interventions to demonstrate innovative approaches for climate change adaptation in water resources management and coastal zone management, contributing to greater economic security, food security and community well being
- Establishing a regional climate center for the Caribbean capable of developing and distributing sector- and user-driven climate and weather products and services to support climate change adaptation and enhanced disaster risk reduction capabilities
- Establishing a Caribbean Environmental and Climate Computational Center to provide regional institutions and scientists with needed resources to simulate environmental and climate processes that will better inform decision-making in disaster risk reduction, water resources and coastal zone management, and climate change adaptation.

Sustainability

Successful adaptation to climate change in SIDS requires building a body of knowledge of best practices, developing broader and deeper levels of scientific understanding, and supporting the transition to a "greener" economic base, including reducing energy dependency to improve the investment climate and reduce external debt. Having spent years improving national government understanding of climate change and associated issues, USAID/ESC will focus on building the capacity of communities and the private sector to adapt to the challenges of climate change through increased access beyond government to information and supporting access to finance supporting the transition of the private sector to more climate resilient production, goods and services. The private sector is the primary engine for investment and economic growth. Support for the introduction and adaptation of new technologies will broaden and build upon the successful work completed under the previous strategy building national government and

regional knowledge and capacity to adapt to climate change.

Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I)

USAID/ESC will support activities designed to strengthen research, analysis, and application of science and technology. Specifically, USAID will assist the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology to advance its research, development and training capacities to create regional climate services and products including long-range forecasts to meet regional and national climate information needs. This information will inform the planning and adaptation of Eastern Caribbean nations to climate change. USAID/ESC will also promote improved technology to collect and analyze crime statistics and address significant data gaps. This may be done through crowd-sourced crime reporting and innovative use of mobile technology for data gathering. In addition, activities will give special consideration to innovative pilot programs that have the potential to provide regional ST&I solutions when scaled-up.

USAID/ESC will coordinate efforts with other agencies whose mandates cover work in this area as illustrated below:

Donor Coordination

- World Bank, UNDP, DFID, IDB provide support for Caribbean Carbon Neutral Tourism Project, development of financial mechanisms to increase climate resilience of the tourism sector
- CDB provides support for disaster management response loans
- DFATD and OAS support storm surge atlas that produced by the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH)).

The donor community sees climate change as a significant challenge for the Eastern and Southern Caribbean. Recognizing the lack of familiarity with climate change issues and best practices for adaptation, multiple donors provide resources supporting the implementation of demonstration projects in order to build a cadre of expertise and knowledge in what works in the regional context. The World Bank, UNDP, DFID, IDB, CDB and DFAT all provide resources to the OECS, national governments, and international institutions including CIMH and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (5 Cs) to improve the regional and national understanding of climate change and support the development of policies for addressing the challenge and recovering from natural disasters made more frequent and stronger by higher temperatures and increasing sea levels. Support for demonstration projects and regional best practice identification and development has focused on governmental and inter-governmental bodies, while the majority of Caribbean populations does not understand the threats, need or urgency to adapt to climate change and are unaware of what will be required to maintain their livelihoods and standard of living as the environment changes. USAID/ESC will transition from its current focus on building host government capacity through the development and implementation of demonstration projects to an emphasis on promoting the green economy to promote economic adaptation to climate change and improving community and citizen awareness and understanding of climate change related challenges.

SIDS are particularly vulnerable to climate change. In the eastern and southern Caribbean, national economies rely on tourism and agriculture, both heavily dependent on the climate and weather. A significant portion of each country's population live or works on and near the sea, making their livelihoods highly susceptible to economic shocks resulting from sea level rise. USAID/ESC will prioritize resources to support the adaptation of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Opportunities to grow the Green Economy and raise awareness of citizens about the challenges posed by climate change will also be supported in St. Lucia, a

SIDS facing the same economic and social challenges as the other Eastern Caribbean island states. St. Lucia has the largest population of the OECS countries, and 39 percent of its economy is based on travel and tourism.

Lesson Learned

Enhanced Technical Leadership in Global Climate Change Portfolio. Current USAID/ESC GCC projects empower regional organizations and national ministries to identify priority climate change vulnerabilities and to develop and implement plans for greater resilience. While this approach is important to ensure local ownership, it has also resulted in implementation challenges and compromised performance, including: conflicts and miscommunications between regional and national-level project coordinators delaying implementation; lack of an approach to ensure that guidelines for improving national policy environments are accepted, sustained and applied in decision-making; and lack of a systematic approach for allocating resources toward the most vulnerable groups across the region.

Future adaptation projects will benefit from greater USAID/ESC technical leadership and involvement in project design, planning, implementation and monitoring. Enhanced technical leadership in each phase, working closely with implementing partners and in greater consultation with other donors, will aim to:

- concentrate resources on those communities facing the greatest climate change vulnerabilities;
- strategically address financial and technical support needs in each countries, based on a structured gap-analysis of other donor funding and host-country initiatives;
- define clear strategies for deriving, analyzing and disseminating lessons learned nationally and region-wide;
- develop sustainable funding sources to support scaling up successful adaptation interventions nationally and region-wide; and
- Effectively monitor program performance, assess impacts, identify potential implementation issues, and facilitate resolution of project challenges to ensure high-impact results.

Building Local Capacity While Intensifying Community-Focused Interventions. USAID/ESC has an impressive track record of local capacity development, with the majority of grants awarded to regional and national governmental organizations. Consultations with other donors indicate, however, that regional organizations have reached maximum capacity for the amount of work they can absorb and effectively implement in this sector. Regional organizations are "fully tapped" by multiple donors, resulting in implementation delays, competition for limited staff and inadequate attention to project objectives, all of which risks having an adverse effect on capacity development. In addition, by relying too heavily on regional and national governments as prime implementing partners, critical needs at the community level may not be addressed, particularly for the most under-represented and vulnerable groups.

Going forward, USAID/ESC will pursue a more balanced approach of supporting regional and national entities, while also targeting community-level assistance. The Mission will consider options for continuing to build local capacity with implementing partners that have proven capacities to deliver the required level of effort for the life of the project. While USAID/ESC's strategic direction will be closely aligned with the priorities of regional entities and enhanced coordination with them will be pursued as mentioned above, implementation may be channeled through additional partners. Future climate change projects will specifically build resilience at the community level targeting the most vulnerable populations with technical assistance, capacity building for greater involvement in government decision-making, and community-to-community sharing to scale up successful solutions. Such solutions may include strengthening the Green Economy to support adaptation to climate change and promote the economic

sustainability and employment resilience of both countries and communities.[xix] Specific indicators of community capacity to adapt to climate change will be developed, incorporated and rigorously monitored to ensure long-term sustainability of results. These community-based efforts will be complemented by ongoing targeted capacity building in regional and national organizations, and will be informed by close coordination with other donors to avoid competing for staff time and/or duplicating efforts.

Explore Opportunities to Support Clean Energy

Caribbean nations and SIDS in particular, see energy dependency and resulting debt as key components of adaptation to climate change. Expansion of the green economy, particularly beyond agriculture and climate-resilient tourism and services, to include issues of energy efficiency and use, is critical to SIDS' economic and social adaptation to climate change. For this reason, several partner countries and donors see clean energy activities as a critical part of their GCC adaption efforts. At the same time, Vice President Joe Biden announced the USG's new initiative to support energy security in the Caribbean in June 2014, and this initiative has identified clean energy as an important pathway to energy security in the region.

Given this, USAID/ESC will explore opportunities to help countries address critical energy security issues associated with the region's heavy reliance on energy imports and associated vulnerabilities to regional prices shocks and supply fluctuations. Such fluctuations can severely impact vulnerable populations' income and livelihoods and place added pressure on already constrained budgets. USAID will examine the relationship between energy costs and the willingness of populations to adapt their means of livelihoods and encourage targeted initiatives and pilot activities to promote greater energy efficiency and enhance the supply of locally-based, renewable energy resources, which will be even more important in the face of increasing climate change impacts.

IV. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Performance Monitoring

The wide geographic scope of USAID/ESC's coverage poses challenges for performance monitoring and will require a two part structure to align with this RDCS' increased focus and selectivity in programming and operationalize USAID Forward M&E reforms.

Core Mission Monitoring Structure

USAID/ESC will increase emphasis on program monitoring and will create an institutional structure to centralize M&E knowledge and management. The USAID/ESC will maintain central systems for tracking, analyzing and reporting data and strengthening the capacity of mission staff to effectively monitor projects and activities. The M&E officer will lead USAID's core monitoring structure and will serve as the Evaluation Point of Contact and Program Monitoring Point of Contact. The M&E officer will also have the critical role of coordinating ongoing data monitoring processes to complement the core monitoring structure.

Second, the mission will create a temporary core data management system. While the USAID/ESC will adopt USAID's standard and recommended performance data management system in the future, it realizes the importance of beginning a data standardization process to centralize collected data and make them available to inform mission management decisions. This system will support ongoing data monitoring (see next section) and consist of standardized Excel spreadsheets tracking indicator progress and performance management issues, as well as a public repository of PIRS and M&E plans developed at the activity and project levels.

Third, the mission will embark on a series of capacity-building training sessions for mission staff in order to standardize knowledge about the definitions and importance of M&E. This process will include presenting standardized data templates with instructions so that all staff have the same knowledge and understanding and can support consistent and robust monitoring activities.

Ongoing Data Monitoring

The mission will develop three processes that complement the mission's core monitoring structure in response to staffing and geographical coverage challenges the mission has faced. These processes include: standardized data collection templates and checklists; training staff to act as roving (flexible) activity monitors when travelling throughout the region; and the use of other USG agencies and local and multilateral partners as sources of indicator and performance data, when possible and appropriate.

The first two elements are interrelated, interdependent and particularly important to the success of USAID/ESC's monitoring strategy. USAID/ESC will first develop standardized data collection templates and checklists to streamline and facilitate data collection from diverse partners and stakeholders, including those who may be less familiar with the activity and technical area. Three important templates include: the site visit template, list of monitoring questions and activity checklists.

Standardized templates will support an important field monitoring system to feed directly into the mission's core monitoring structure, with the M&E officer tracking progress. At the same time, the templates will allow USAID/ESC to take full advantage of trips planned by all staff members to different countries to monitor activity implementation and collect monitoring data, thereby conserving mission resources and reducing costs. In addition, by standardizing data collection templates and the monitoring process, USAID/ESC will reduce the likelihood of data collection errors that may occur when transferring monitoring data from the field to the mission for analysis and use. Finally, by standardizing templates USAID/ESC will be able to engage and leverage non-traditional approaches and non-experts in the monitoring process, for example, sending a staff member from one technical area to monitor an activity in a different area, or having USG counterparts monitor activities during a related trip.

In addition, USAID/ESC is exploring ways to support data collection by local and multilateral institutions in the region, such as CARICOM. With limited and focused financial support to these institutions, the mission envisions leveraging higher quality and more available data that can be used by both USAID/ESC and other donors in the region, helping to bridge the significant data gaps that USAID has identified.

USAID/ESC's performance monitoring will be based on a performance management plan (PMP), which will define indicators, data sources, methods and approaches of data collection and analysis, and on data quality assessments, which will track baseline, target, and actual values for each indicator through the life of the RDCS. The PMP will also include indicators to monitor regional and country context and critical assumptions. The PMP will be developed subsequent to approval of the RDCS using PPL's PMP development guidance.

Ongoing data monitoring will be closely aligned with the precepts of prioritization. Given the geographical scope and development context, it is necessary to prioritize data monitoring based on the criticality of each activity's contribution to the attainment of an objective and the risks involved. As the criticality and severity of risks change, the corresponding monitoring priority also changes. Therefore, the number of countries visited during monitoring visits will be determined by the priorities set by each technical sector.

Evaluation

Consistent with USAID's evaluation policy, USAID/ESC will conduct a series of impact and performance evaluations for each development objective over the lifetime of the RDCS.

These evaluations will examine whether interventions are achieving the intended results and generate learning opportunities to inform future program designs. A full evaluation plan will be completed when the RDCS is approved, aligning with USAID's evaluation policy by identifying at least one performance evaluation of each large project and at least one opportunity for an impact evaluation for each development objective. Pilot activities will also be evaluated.

Evaluation questions will be further refined as the RDCS progresses, but illustrative portfolio-wide evaluation questions include:

- How effective has USAID assistance been in preventing a rise of citizen insecurity?
- Does a tiered approach to programming effectively achieve development outcomes? What advantages or disadvantages might be associated with this selective tiered approach?
- To what extent has increased access to data improved decision-making, specifically in the citizen security and climate change sectors?

Learning

The RDCS was developed drawing on extensive analytical work, broad stakeholder consultation, assessments, performance evaluations and current program implementation. These information flows and analyses informed USAID/ESC's approach and have enabled the mission to build on past successes, learn from failures and validate assumptions related to the development hypothesis. USAID/ESC will apply a Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) approach, engaging various stakeholders in addition to USAID/ESC staff, to ensure learning and planning are continuous.

USAID/ESC is trying a new approach to programming, applying a tiered strategy to focus and target interventions in the neediest countries and strengthen monitoring. Therefore, a structured approach to learning will be vital to guide USAID investments. As changing conditions and new information and data affect the strategy, as detailed in the Geographic Focus section of the RDCS, USAID/ESC will help to ensure development interventions are maximizing impact in the ten countries served. The intent is to continuously assess the causal pathway to desired outcomes and adjust activities as necessary for the most effective interventions.

In addition, USAID/ESC will emphasize monitoring as part of its learning approach. By creating a formal monitoring structure and standardizing data collection and analysis processes, monitoring data will be more available and useful to the mission in its decision-making processes, and to the LAC Bureau in its oversight role. This will be of particular importance for the tiered approach; monitoring will be used to analyze how activity implementation relates to development results in each tier. With more useful data available through improved monitoring, the mission will be better equipped to learn from that data and focus or reorient its development strategies, as needed.

ANNEXES

Antigua and Barbuda

- SIZE: 442.6 sq. km
- POPULATION: 89,069
- YOUTH: 16.7% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: Tourism continues to dominate Antigua and Barbuda's economy, accounting for nearly 60% of GDP and 40% of investment. The country's agricultural production is focused on the domestic market and constrained by a limited water supply and a labor shortage stemming from the lure of higher wages in tourism and construction. Manufacturing comprises enclave-type assembly for export with major products being bedding, handicrafts, and electronic components. In 2009, Antigua's economy was severely hit by the global economic crisis and suffered from the collapse of its largest private sector employer, a steep decline in tourism, a rise in debt, and a sharp economic contraction between 2009-2011. Antigua has not yet returned to its pre-crisis growth levels.

Barbados

- SIZE: 430 sq km
- POPULATION: 283,221
- YOUTH: 13.8% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: Barbados is the wealthiest and most developed country in the Eastern Caribbean and enjoys one of the highest per capita incomes in Latin America. Historically, the Barbadian economy was dependent on sugarcane cultivation and related activities. However, in recent years the economy has diversified into light industry and tourism with about four-fifths of GDP and of exports being attributed to services. Offshore finance and information services are important foreign exchange earners and thrive from having the same time zone as eastern US financial centers and a relatively highly educated workforce. Barbados' tourism, financial services, and construction industries have been hard hit since the onset of the global economic crisis in 2008. Barbados' public debt-to-GDP ratio rose from 56% in 2008 to 90.5% in 2013. Growth prospects are limited because of a weak tourism outlook and planned austerity measures.

Dominica

- SIZE: 751 sq km
- POPULATION: 71,684
- YOUTH: 17.2% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: The Dominican economy has been dependent on agriculture - primarily bananas - in years past, but increasingly has been driven by tourism as the government seeks to promote Dominica as an "ecotourism" destination. Moreover, Dominica has successfully developed an offshore medical education sector. In order to diversify the island's economy, the government is also attempting to develop an offshore financial sector and plans to sign agreements with the private sector to develop geothermal energy resources. Although public debt levels continue to exceed pre-recession levels, the debt burden declined from 78% of GDP in 2011 to approximately 70% in 2012, one of the lowest levels in the Eastern Caribbean.

Grenada

- SIZE: 344 sq km
- POPULATION: 105,483
- YOUTH: 17.1% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: Grenada relies on tourism as its main source of foreign exchange especially since the construction of an international airport in 1985. Hurricanes Ivan (2004) and Emily (2005) severely damaged the agricultural sector - particularly nutmeg and cocoa cultivation - which had been a key driver of economic growth. Grenada has rebounded from the devastating effects of the hurricanes but is now saddled with the debt burden from the rebuilding process.

Guyana

- SIZE: 214,969 sq km
- POPULATION: 747,884
- YOUTH: 20.7% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: The Guyanese economy exhibited moderate economic growth in recent years and is based largely on agriculture and extractive industries. The economy is heavily dependent upon the export of six commodities - sugar, gold, bauxite, shrimp, timber, and rice - which represent nearly 60% of the country's GDP and are highly susceptible to adverse weather conditions and fluctuations in commodity prices. Chronic problems include a shortage of skilled labor and a deficient infrastructure. Despite recent improvements, the government is still juggling a sizable external debt against the urgent need for expanded public investment. Much of Guyana's growth in recent years has come from a surge in gold production in response to global prices. In 2013, production of sugar dropped to a 23-year low.

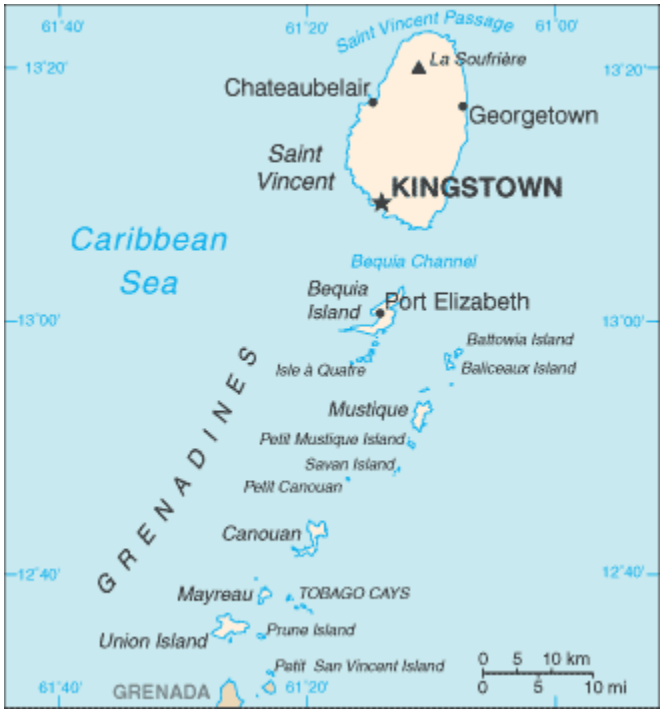
Saint Kitts and Nevis

- SIZE: 261 sq km
- POPULATION: 53,584
- YOUTH: 15.6% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: The economy of Saint Kitts and Nevis depends on tourism; since the 1970s tourism has replaced sugar as the traditional mainstay of the economy. Following the 2005 harvest, the government closed the sugar industry, after several decades of losses. To compensate for lost jobs, the government has embarked on a program to diversify the agricultural sector and to stimulate other sectors of the economy, such as export-oriented manufacturing and offshore banking. Like other tourist destinations in the Caribbean, St. Kitts and Nevis is vulnerable to damage from natural disasters and shifts in tourism demand. The government has made notable progress on reducing its public debt—from 154% of GDP in 2011 to 83% in 2013—although it still faces one of the highest levels in the world, largely attributable to public enterprise losses.

Saint Lucia

- SIZE: 616 sq km
- POPULATION: 180,870
- YOUTH: 16.9% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: The island nation has been able to attract foreign business and investment, especially in its offshore banking and tourism industries. Tourism is Saint Lucia's main source of jobs and income - accounting for 65% of GDP - and the island's main source of foreign exchange earnings. The manufacturing sector is the most diverse in the Eastern Caribbean area. Crops such as bananas, mangos, and avocados continue to be grown for export, but St. Lucia's once solid banana industry has been devastated by strong competition. Saint Lucia is vulnerable to a variety of external shocks, including volatile tourism receipts, natural disasters, and dependence on foreign oil. In 2013, the government introduced a National Competitiveness and Productivity Council to address St. Lucia's high public wages and lack of productivity.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines



- SIZE: 389 sq km
- POPULATION: 109,373
- YOUTH: 17.0% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: Success of the economy hinges upon seasonal variations in agriculture, tourism, and construction activity as well as remittance inflows. Much of the workforce is employed in banana production and tourism, but persistent high unemployment has prompted many to leave the islands. This lower-middle-income country is vulnerable to natural disasters - tropical storms wiped out substantial portions of crops in 1994, 1995, and 2002. Saint Vincent is home to a small offshore banking sector and has moved to adopt international regulatory standards. The government's ability to invest in social programs and respond to external shocks is constrained by its high public debt burden. Weak recovery in the tourism and construction sectors will limit growth prospects in 2014.

Suriname

- SIZE: 163,820 sq km
- POPULATION: 534,541
- YOUTH: 17.5% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: The economy is dominated by the mining industry, with exports of alumina, gold, and oil accounting for about 85% of exports and 25% of government revenues, making the economy highly vulnerable to mineral price volatility. Suriname's economic prospects for the medium term will depend on continued commitment to responsible monetary and fiscal policies and to the introduction of structural reforms to liberalize markets and promote competition. The government's reliance on revenue from extractive industries will temper Suriname's economic outlook, especially if gold prices continue their downward trend.

Trinidad and Tobago

- SIZE: 5,128 sq km
- POPULATION: 1,337,439
- YOUTH: 13.6% of the population is between the ages of 15 – 24
- ECONOMY: Trinidad and Tobago has earned a reputation as an excellent investment site for international businesses and has one of the highest per capita incomes in Latin America. Growth had been fueled by investments in liquefied natural gas, petrochemicals, and steel with additional upstream and downstream investment planned. Trinidad and Tobago is the leading Caribbean producer of oil and gas, and its economy is heavily dependent upon these resources but it also supplies manufactured goods, notably food products and beverages, as well as cement to the Caribbean region. Oil and gas account for about 40% of GDP and 80% of exports, but only 5% of employment. The country is also a regional financial center with a well-regulated and stable financial system. The economy benefits from a growing trade surplus with the US. Crime and bureaucratic hurdles continue to be the biggest deterrents for attracting more foreign direct investment and business.

END NOTES

[i] https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/homicide.html

[ii] https://unodc.org

[iii] While USAID focuses on 10 countries, CARICOM includes 15 full member states

[iv] Caribbean Examinations Council CSEC Results – 2012

[v] *The Handling of Children who Come in Conflict with the Law* – Wendy Singh – Penal Reform International

[vi] Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean March 2007, A Joint Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank.

[vii] USAID. (2013). *State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict*, p. iv.

[viii] These gaps are summarized from USAID/ESC's Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Juvenile Justice Assessment (June 2011).

[ix] Eastern and Southern Caribbean Youth Assessment (ESCYA) Final Report, USAID and Social Impact, September 2013, p.iii.

[x] IDB. (accessed online 15 August 2013). "At-Risk Youth: An Urgent Challenge for the Caribbean,"

[xi] St. Lucia spends almost 6.8 percent of GDP in the education sector; other OECD countries spend less at 4.8 percent (UNICEF 2007).

[xii] The Youth Assessment Report (August 2013) reported that youth interviewed cited five reasons for high male dropout rates: (1) family pressure to provide financial support, (2) 'broken homes', (3) lack of after-school programs, (4) allure of instant gratification, and (5) schools themselves (violence, teacher underperformance, outdated teacher methodologies), p. 11

[xiii] Remarks of Secretary John Kerry on Climate Change, February 16, 2014, http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/02/221704.htm

[xiv] USAID Rapid Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, Eastern and Southern Caribbean Regional Report, September 2013, https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQtM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDBmY2Uy&rID=341564

[xv] UN launches the International Year of Small Island Developing States, February 2014, http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sgsm15664.doc.htm

[xvi] http://www.climatecentral.org/news/adapting-to-sea-level-rise-could-save-trillions-by-2100-17034

[xvii] USAID Rapid Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, Eastern and Southern Caribbean Regional Report, September 2013, p. 8, https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQtM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDBmY2Uy&rID=341564

[xviii] UNDP Human Development Report (2007). Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World. UNDP: New York.

[xix] The Green Economy is the promotion of, and transition to, technologies and products that preserve the natural capital upon which countries depend for economic productivity and growth.